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EDITORIAL

HARD TO KEEP GOOD HELP

The Reagan Administration is trying to create a freelance economy, a society of temporary workers, nonunion labor, voluntary help and self-supporting welfare rejects doing the dirty work for a few managers and executives. It proposes to fill most new government jobs from the temp pool so that it need not provide expensive benefits like health insurance and pension plans.

Last week, Reagan's Inaugural Committee announced that it was looking for nonunion actors to perform at the galas to be held around Washington on January 18 and 19. "We're essentially asking them to be volunteers," committee operative John Buckley explained. "No one forced them to audition."

Parade performers are quintessential members of the Reaganomic work force—that "clean-cut, all-American type" (as the audition call was worded) of McNugget maker, video-cassette jockey and car rental clerk, who has replaced the production worker as the backbone of the economy. They toil and they spin for low wages, beyond the fringe of security benefits. The problem is that they don't know how to keep a job.

And as at the bottom, so at the top. The President's men are acting like Kelly Girls, jumping offices with abandon. Baker to Treasury and Regan to the White House; Clark to his ranch and Deaver to his public relations firm. For one, the lure is more money; for another, more leisure or more power or perhaps a better photocopier and a desk nearer to the coffeemaker.

Temps in the White House inspire no confidence among taxpayers. Reagan isn't running a carwash. Or is he? A little job security for the help might give us the idea that the Administration cares about its work.

A KOREAN AQUINO?
Christopher Hitchens

THE NEW ANTI-YOUTH MOVEMENT
Ted Galen Carpenter

STATE-LEVEL FARM PROTEST
Jim Schwab

SHAWCROSS AND THE LEFT
Richard Falk

MOTHERWELL
Arthur C. Danto

A PLAY'S THE THING
Paul Berman

HALF MAY STARVE

THE POLITICS OF FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA

JONATHAN B. TUCKER

Despite extensive coverage of the Ethiopian famine in the media, few Americans are aware that the crisis, like earlier famines in Cambodia and Biafra, has its roots in war and politics as well as drought.

The northern provinces of Tigré and Eritrea, which have been worst hit by the famine, have also been embroiled for many years in armed struggles against the central government in Addis Ababa. As many as 3.8 million Tigréans and 2 million Eritreans are in danger of starvation, yet the ongoing civil wars have cut off the vast majority of these victims from aid programs run by the Ethiopian government and the international aid agencies operating under its auspices. "Because of the fighting, very little of the food contributed by the United States and other donor countries is reaching the starving in the rebel-controlled areas," says Dan Connell, a former Reuters correspondent in Ethiopia and now executive director of Grassroots International, a relief agency based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Although Connell is one of the few people involved who will talk about it, it is an open secret among relief workers that more than half the famine victims in Ethiopia are not being reached by the government's programs. Ethiopia's ruling military junta, led by Lieut. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, is covering up that fact, and foreign diplomats and relief agency officials have been reluctant to reveal it for fear the government will curtail their operations altogether. Even more disturbing, there is strong evidence that the government has deliberately withheld

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LETTERS.

SIMPLISTIC VIEW OF SENDERO

New York City

I was pleased to see *The Nation* make an effort to cover events in Peru, but Jeanne DeQuine fails to analyze a very complex situation ["The Challenge of Shining Path," Dec. 8].

First, DeQuine grossly exaggerates the extent to which the admittedly brutal Sendero Luminoso guerrillas are responsible for the mounting toll of dead and "disappeared" in Peru. According to official sources, more than 1,500 people have disappeared and some 4,000 have died. While information from Ayacucho is carefully controlled by the military, the mutilated cadavers left conspicuously on the roadsides and the graves containing hundreds of bodies have most often been attributed to the security forces, even by officials of the Ayacucho prosecutor's office and by a military intelligence official who spoke anonymously to Marlise Simons of *The New York Times* (see *The Times*, Aug. 18, 1984).

It is simply not true that the "guerrillas have slaughtered thousands of Peruvians." I have never seen such a high figure cited by any Peruvian source. It is undeniable that Sendero has killed soldiers and public officials as well as many peasants, allegedly for siding with the army. Meanwhile, the security forces have carried out indiscriminate arrests, massacres, tortures and rapes, have forced disappearances, terrorized communities, stolen property and obstructed justice in Ayacucho and adjoining provinces.

It is also misleading for DeQuine to suggest that Peru's economic problems are due mainly to destruction by Sendero Luminoso. DeQuine cites losses of $250 million in four years owing to guerrilla actions. Yet special tax breaks for U.S. oil interests alone have led to an estimated loss of revenue of $414 million in the same period, while in 1983, $1.8 billion—65 percent of Peru's export income—went to service the country's foreign debt. Peru has faced a severe economic crisis since the mid-1970s, years before Sendero launched any attacks at all.

The causality, in fact, is reversed. Sendero's emergence reflects the long-term poverty and neglect suffered by the Andean peasants, now aggravated by government austerity measures and overcentralization. Sendero, as well as the United Left, calls for a "radical redistribution of the country's wealth" (though obviously their methods differ). The guerrillas have tapped deeply rooted regional, racial and class polarization in Peru. Their message, and not merely their military skill, explains why they have been "difficult to contain." DeQuine simplistically depicts Sendero as a wild, nihilistic outfit bent on wreaking havoc. But Raúl Gonzalez of the Lima research institute DESCO has carefully documented Sendero's program and strategy, showing concrete goals and systematic means to achieve them. Whatever one thinks of Sendero's methods, it is a mistake not to take its aims seriously.

Sendero has clearly aggravated a bad situation in Peru, but I believe the greater threats to democracy are the elitist political model and economic policies of the government, and President Fernando Belaúnde Terry's surrender of authority to the armed forces in judicial and budgetary as well as counterinsurgency decisions. Given this situation, military repression is a response not merely to Sendero Luminoso but also to those who protest deteriorating economic conditions. That is evidenced by the recent arrests or disappearances of journalists and peasant and labor leaders falsely accused of being terrorists.

By questioning DeQuine's analysis I do not seek to justify Sendero Luminoso but to provide a context for understanding the emergence of the group and the causes of the mounting violence in Peru. Primary responsibility for the latter, in my judgment, lies with the Belaúnde Terry government and the armed forces.

Carol Barton

APPARENT BIASES

Washington

Having read reports on guerrilla movements in Argentine, Peruvian, Chilean and Uruguayan newspapers for more than twenty years as a correspondent for the Mexican newspaper *Journada* and the Venezuelan newspaper *Ultimas Noticias*, I find it easy to spot a certain pattern in the way journalists present their material. Almost all reports use the same key words and misrepresent many facts. Unfortunately, Jeanne DeQuine has fallen into that trap.

According to DeQuine, the guerrillas are "killers" or "terrorists" who have "slaughtered thousands of Peruvians." That the Senderistas have killed is true. What is bothersome is the descriptions of the government's counterinsurgency forces. These, she notes, are "relatively inexperienced in combating internal political violence," have been "provoked" to use force and "accused of murdering civilians," but only in the "desperate effort to root out the elusive guerrillas." With such a formula, it is the good guys against the villains. . . .

Even when describing deaths, DeQuine's bias is all too apparent. Killings by the guerrillas are "atrocities," while those attributed to the military are "alleged" and their victims are "reported as missing." With the guerrillas, their evil ways are fact; with the military, the terms are conditional: DeQuine notes that the army "may be acting indiscriminately." . . . There is ample proof that in Ayacucho province, where the counterinsurgency war rages, the military's tactics are as dirty as anywhere in Latin America.

The Peruvian government has consistently denied accusations about military overkill, and DeQuine has obviously accepted those rebuttals. For example, Foreign Minister Luis Percovich has dismissed the findings of the National Rights Commission and independent human rights organizations that at least 661 people have disappeared. Other officials have likewise dismissed Amnesty International's charges, as well as those of Nobel Peace Prizewinner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. DeQuine observes that Amnesty International, which denounced several killings, was rightly criticized for "inaccurate research," since "one of the supposed victims was later discovered to be alive." One wonders why she focuses on that one error.

Finally, in referring to the guerrillas, sweeping statements like "They have transformed Peru into a land of fear and suspicion, threatening the country's recently restored and still fragile democracy" discredit her the most. . . . In the same vein, she observes that when newspaper headlines read "They Killed 26 Peasants," "everybody knows who 'they' are." That is simply not the case. Most Peruvians I know aren't certain at all. The killers could just as easily be the military.

Bold with the guerrillas, circumspect with the military, the journalist has written an article that deserved to be published not in *The Nation* but in *Commentary*.

Mario Szichman

QUESTIONABLE INTERPRETATIONS

New York City

Jeanne DeQuine's article about the guerrilla movement in Peru contained questionable interpretations of the current Peruvian situation. I am sure that the article was well intentioned, but it shows a superficial understanding of Peruvian society and politics.

What is most alarming about the article is the way it presents the current violence in Peru, leaving the military's role ambiguous when by all reliable estimates of Peruvian and international human rights organizations the armed forces are largely responsible for the reign of terror. . . .

In addition, it is certainly an understatement that "the country's numerous leftist groups . . . worry that the government will clamp down on legal political expression." Since Sendero Luminoso began its guerrilla activities in mid-1980 (Sendero was formed as a party in 1969 and is a spinoff of Red Flag, a separate party), the government has consistently harassed, arrested and even killed members of opposition parties, independents and church members. . . .

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EDITORIALS.

Subway Catharsis

In the Fourteenth Street subway station at Sixth Avenue in Manhattan—Bernhard Goetz's home stop—a new piece of graffiti adorns the grimy tiles: "GOETZ RULES NIGGERS." There's nothing special in the sight of filth and bile scrawled on the city's walls, but that terse emblem may be unique: of the millions of words written and broadcast about the "Death Wish" Vigilante since his attack on December 22, those three most frankly and directly state the racist sentiments that infuse the case.

Racism is hardly a secret, and the significance of a white man emptying his revolver into the bodies of four black youths is lost on no one. It is what everyone talks about in their homes, at work, on the street. Race is the referent when people recount tales of their own muggings or of assaults on friends and neighbors. But now the media displays an unaccustomed tact. Last week, *The New York Times* published almost a full page of research on Goetz in which the word "black" appeared only once, in a quote from Goetz's description of a 1981 mugging, and the racial aspect of the recent shooting was never mentioned. Goetz's campaign against neighborhood crime was detailed, tenants in his apartment house were interviewed, and his life and

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career were chronicled. Reporter Robert McFadden apparently thought it was relevant to relay the story that Goetz's father was indicted for molesting two teen-age boys in 1960, but he omitted one highly charged item that was published in another paper just after Goetz's surrender: some neighbors who attended a tenants' meeting Goetz once organized were appalled at his "bigotry."

Even the tabloids, for whom no sensation is too lurid, present the racism only by inference: pictures of the assailant and his victims, the coy use of journalistic code words and the repetition of telltale descriptions ("the blond, well-dressed engineer"). Public officials, including Mayor Edward Koch and Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward (the first black man to hold that position), were quick to condemn the shootings, but they seemed more concerned about the challenge it posed to the city's monopoly on police power, the affront to the city administration's competence and the effect on November's local elections than about the racial crisis that it expressed.

Apparently, the media and the officials believe that if race is not mentioned, it need not be confronted and might somehow disappear as an issue. Other justifications, some of them valid in part, are applied to fit the crime and the public reaction. Self-defense is a natural right; the public is sick of crime, mistrustful of the police and despairing of justice from the courts; people need to take revenge, personally or vicariously, for all the unpunished "little murders" of urban life; the social contract ran out in the 1960s and has not been renewed. Local television news shows bolster arguments for those theories with sidewalk interviews that confirm the racial component by seeming to deny it: a black woman supports Goetz; the mother of one of the shooting victims says her son deserved it; a "civil rights lawyer" and a CORE leader express approval for the vigilante's attack. If race were not at the heart of the matter, such pointed responses, marshaled to influence public opinion, would not be necessary.

Avoiding public discussion of the issue that is on everyone's mind does not dampen hatred but gives it a measure of legitimacy. The subway shooting has loosed a lot of ugly thoughts and unworthy opinions not only in New York City, where it is hard to view one's fellows of all varieties without fear and hostility, but in peaceable corners of the country, where street crime is rare and social relations are generally cordial. Storekeepers in New Hampshire, farmers in Iowa, suburbanites in Georgia, reveal to reporters and talk-show hosts an anger that hardly comes from personal experience. Rather, it is a metaphorical rage, the function of a pervasive sense of powerlessness that fixes primarily—though not exclusively—on race as a cause and revenge as a cure.

In fact, the subway shooting and its consequences have become a mythic expression of the illness of American civil society. It is a drama strong enough to arouse a country inured to ordinary acts of violence, able "to hit a real raw nerve" as people are saying, to subvert the facts of the case to the construction of an instant social myth. Goetz himself is called an unlikely hero, but he seems perfect for his part in this modern morality play: the story of a lonely yuppie terminator, neurotic, freelance and divorced in the anomic city; but blond, brave and Germanic in battle against the invading dark barbarians. It doesn't matter in the myth, as opposed to the event, whether he was hassled or attacked, whether he saw the youths' screwdrivers or not, whether he shot them in the front or the back, whether he meant to kill or defend. In the play, the blasts from his silver gun arouse a powerless people, and the wounds of his victims redeem a fallen land.

The myth as well as the reality evoke frightening historical analogies. Our nightmares are filled with images of tribal violence rationalized as political necessity. We know what results when racial tension is exploited to empower a populace whose pride and patriotism have been offended. Nothing good comes from acts of social vengeance. The subways and streets of New York are no safer now, the courts are still clogged, the police are no more efficient, punks are not cowed and ordinary citizens are not confident.

To change the conditions that gave rise to the myth, the myth must first be destroyed. Racism must be addressed and attacked. The system that denies power to the people has to be reconsidered and its inequities redressed. Fear, hatred and hostility are private emotions, but they are also public issues. And they are written on the subway walls.

So Out We're In

So who's a yuppie? According to *Newsweek*'s recent cover story, there are 4 million young urban professionals who make the grade: 25-to-39-year-old nonsmoking fitness buffs who earn more than $45,000 a year and share a commitment to excellence. *The Wall Street Journal*, though, thinks the category is broader. "Could it be, in fact, that we're all Yuppies now?" the paper asked in a December 28 editorial. "Well, not all of us," it concluded. "Ralph Nader, Lester Thurow and the editors of The Nation are out."

It's a little embarrassing to be excluded from yuppiedom so publicly, especially for sophisticated urban professionals like *Nation* editors. While our incomes don't meet *Newsweek*'s standards, we do try to hold up our end. Of the twelve *Nation* editors, four are between 25 and 39; nine and a half don't smoke; five work out regularly (although the local Y may not count as a health club); and all share a commitment to excellence. If only *The Wall Street Journal* had seen our party during the holidays—homemade pâté, six kinds of crackers, imported champagne, even Brie—held in offices recently redesigned to resemble a SoHo restaurant.

Still, it's easy to see where we've gone wrong. None of us hold the faith in money universally evinced by the yuppies interviewed by *Newsweek*. One young woman doubts that she and her husband could live on less than $200,000 a year; if they have children, of course, their requirements will increase. Another said she became disillusioned with her career as a social worker when she realized that she had

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committed herself to being poor. What view of the world causes one to regard social workers as poor? "The principal belief of a Yuppie," according to *The Journal*, "is that there are no limits." It doesn't sound that way to us. The yuppie hunger for money and possessions betrays fear and cynicism. The world is a frightening place, the yuppies say, and all we can do is save ourselves.

We don't agree, and we doubt that our readers do. That's where *The Wall Street Journal* is wrong. There are lots of nonyuppies in America. And we'll let you in on a secret: as of the date of *Newsweek*'s cover story, being a yuppie is officially *out*.

All-Natural News

The White House, guided by President Reagan's repeated complaints that his views are distorted by the reporters who cover him, is starting a service to distribute Presidential speeches and announcements.

. . .

One White House official, who spoke only on condition of not being identified, said Mr. Reagan's aides believed they could get Mr. Reagan's views across more effectively if those views were "unfiltered" by the independent media.

. . .

The White House News Service offers subscribers the official unedited version of what Mr. Reagan and his office have to say. "We don't do a thing to the stuff," [acting director of White House media relations Susan] Mathis said.

. . .

To distribute the material electronically, the White House has contracted with ITT Dialcom, an electronic mail network that charges subscribers, who use their own computers to get access to the network by telephone lines.

—The New York Times, *January 7*

Given the present fierce competition among the wire services, we worry that the White House News Service will have trouble transmitting its message to the modems of America. So far, the W.H.N.S. has signed up several clients, including a right-wing organization called Citizens for America, but we doubt that reams of boring speeches and lengthy handouts datelined 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will stir up much excitement on newspaper row.

After mulling over this problem for numerous minutes, we hit upon a solution. We dumped it in the lap of a Madison Avenue type we know who advises us on, well, Madison Avenue-type problems. As usual, he didn't let us down. What the White House needs, he told us, is a television commercial selling its news service. And he crafted the following video vignette:

(OPEN ON: A WHITE HOUSE LIVING ROOM. NANCY IS LOUNGING IN AN EASY CHAIR, READING. AS THE CAMERA PANS IN, SHE LOOKS UP.)

NANCY: Oh, hello. I was just reading a government study by the people at the Heritage Foundation on polluted media. It's something every American should be concerned about. (PAN IN CLOSE) Did you know that 99 percent of the news we consume contains harmful additives? Well, it's true. You'd be surprised—and shocked—at how many hands it passes through before it reaches you.

(CUT TO: MONTAGE OF NEWSROOM. SWEATY REPORTERS TYPING ON WORD PROCESSORS. AN UNKEMPT EDITOR DRIBBLING CIGARETTE ASHES ON COPY AND WIELDING SHEARS. DIRTY HANDS OF PRINTERS SORTING PAPERS. SLOPPILY DRESSED NEWSDEALER CHEWING CIGAR, ETC.)

NANCY: Not only is our news produced under unsanitary conditions; it is filtered, diluted and adulterated by journalists and editors. In a recent test, the Food and Drug Administration discovered that three samples of news from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the *Chicago Tribune* contained substantial traces of liberal bias, in amounts ranging from 30 to 77.8 percent. That's not surprising, for many of these stories were unhygienically leaked by unidentified officials in dirty back alleys (CUT TO: PIC OF UNSAVORY TYPE IN BACK ALLEY.)

What can you do about it? Why not try the wholesome, American alternative: news from the White House News Service. (CUT TO: MONTAGE OF CLEAN-CUT PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHWRITERS IN WHITE COATS.) Here in the White House kitchens we cook up nutritious, *natural* news. As our slogan says, "We don't do a thing to the stuff." The ingredients are an old Reagan family recipe that hasn't been changed since my husband was Governor of California. Just read what it says on the package. (CUT TO: W.H.N.S. PRESS RELEASE WITH WORDS "CONTAINS ORGANICALLY GROWN TRUTH AND FACTS. SODIUM PROPIONATE ADDED TO RETARD SPOILAGE.") That's all. So subscribe to the W.H.N.S. and make America once again a shining city on the hill.

(MUSIC: "AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL" UP AND OUT.)

(FADE)

HITCHENS ON 'FIRING LINE'

Christopher Hitchens will appear, along with E. Emmett Tyrrell, editor of *The American Spectator*, on William F. Buckley's *Firing Line* at the end of this month. The program will be aired on Saturday, January 26 at 10 A.M. on WNET in New York City. On Sunday, January 27, it can be seen at 4 P.M. on WTTW in Chicago (C.S.T.) and on WGBH in Boston (E.S.T.), and at 5 P.M. on WETA in Washington (E.S.T.) and on KCET in Los Angeles (P.S.T.). *Firing Line* is aired on public television stations around the country on varying days, so viewers in other areas should consult their local listings.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

If the Administration had a human rights policy, it would be about to come under severe strain. At the end of the month, Kim Dae Jung, the leader of the democratic opposition in South Korea who has lived in exile in the United States since 1982, will follow the example of his friend Benigno Aquino and go home. The mere mention of his name provokes a strange twin reaction—rage and fear in the case of the South Korean military hierarchy and an affected indifference and boredom on the part of the U.S. State Department. Kim is passé, say the languid bureaucrats in Washington. He is yesterday's man, irrelevant to the exciting new South Korea being forged by Gen. Chun Doo Hwan. His fate, says the U.S. government, is South Korea's "internal affair."

The South Korean dictatorship knows better. It knows that Kim Dae Jung poses a tremendous threat to its rule and that he could be the catalyst for a movement of democratic renewal. It also knows that the Reagan Administration is by no means neutral or indifferent. On the contrary, it is fully committed to the maintenance of oligarchical rule. The South Korean Army is, ultimately, under American command. American troops are entrenched on the peninsula, with nuclear weapons at the ready. When General Chun seized power in 1980, a South Korean front-line battalion was diverted from the northern border to help secure the dictatorship and put down civilian dissent. That atrocious decision, which weakened the very border defense of which conservatives make such a fetish, was taken with the permission of Gen. John A. Wickham Jr., the U.S. Commander in South Korea. So there is no point in pretending that Kim's political future is no concern of the United States.

Nor is there any sense in pretending not to know what risks he is running by going home. On September 12, John Hughes, a State Department spokesman, said: "We fully recognize this is a matter for the Korean government to handle. . . . I do not know what his legal status is under Korean law." Nonsense. It is well known to the American government that Kim faces seventeen and a half years of a prison sentence. This sentence is the residue of a death sentence which was imposed by a grotesque military court and then commuted, in 1981. It is equally well known that the South Korean authorities have made several spirited attempts to murder him. In 1971, after he received 46 percent of the vote in a presidential election which was blatantly rigged (and which was the last to feature more than one candidate), Kim was severely injured in an automobile collision arranged by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. In August 1973 he was kidnapped by the same agency during a visit to Japan and narrowly escaped assassination. From that date to this, with the exception of a brief interregnum between the Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan dictatorships, in 1980, he has been in prison, house arrest or exile. Those in Washington who have trained the K.C.I.A. and who arm and command its military masters are in no position to claim that this is an internal affair.

I visited Kim recently at his modest office in Virginia. He is an impressive man; single-minded about democracy and strikingly calm about the risky prospect of his return. He retains an unironic faith in the democratic principles of the United States, even though General Chun's coup took place with only a squeak from Jimmy Carter, and even though the despotic system continues with less than a squeak from Ronald Reagan. He still refuses to criticize the United States in public, though he is "disappointed" at his failure to persuade Washington of the need for a democratic South Korea. I asked him why he thought the Administration was so insouciant, and he looked bewildered for a moment. But it's clear that he is going home because he has lost hope in a change of policy here.

Possibly there is some "quiet diplomacy" going on. South Korea is scheduled to host the summer Olympic Games in 1988, and a blood-spattered tarmac scene à la Marcos would not be the ideal curtain raiser. On its good days, the Reagan Administration desires a quiet life, and it doesn't especially need another outrage from its Pacific clients. But the South Korean right is an old hand at the quiet diplomacy game. It doesn't have to persuade America to send troops to support it because it already has them. It also has a coterie of rich and active supporters among the Reaganites, many of them on the payroll of that disgusting fanatic Sun Myung Moon [see "Minority Report," January 22, 1983]. And it can claim to be a "front-line state" against communism—against, in fact, the world's most regimented and religious Stalinist system.

But quiet diplomacy, as usual, has translated into collaboration with dictatorship. Elliott Abrams, the man who holds the undemanding job of Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, has said it is the North Koreans who wish to kill Kim, not the Chun regime. This echoes the pathetic attempt by the Marcos regime to blame the Philippine Communist Party for the murder of Aquino. It also, disgracefully, supplies the South Korean death squads with an alibi in advance.

We have come to expect no better from Abrams, but what an insult he is hurling, in our name, at a brave man. As it happens, Kim Dae Jung is a staunch anticommunist, a devout Roman Catholic and a believer in what he touchingly calls free enterprise. In a sane world, he would be my respected political opponent—a decent Christian Democrat. In the zombie world of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Elliott Abrams, I have to count myself his ally. In the case of South Korea the conservatives and their sidekicks have proved once again that they prefer not authoritarianism to totalitarianism but authoritarianism to democracy.

* * *

The presumption of Edwin Meese 3d knows no limit. First, by his sleazy attitude to money and "connections," he puts us all to the trouble of appointing a special prosecutor. Now, he is asking the court to reimburse him for $700,000 in legal fees he paid as a result. Where did all the money go? Come to that, where did it all come from? Another lapse of memory seems to be on the agenda.

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ARTICLES.

CURBING OUR KIDS

The New Anti-Youth Movement

TED GALEN CARPENTER

Dozens of lawmakers and concerned citizens gathered in the White House Rose Garden last July 18, in an atmosphere of excitement and victory. Led by Candy Lightner, founder of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), and New Jersey Democratic Senator Frank Lautenberg, they had come to savor a legislative triumph they insisted would save young people from the ravages of drunk driving.

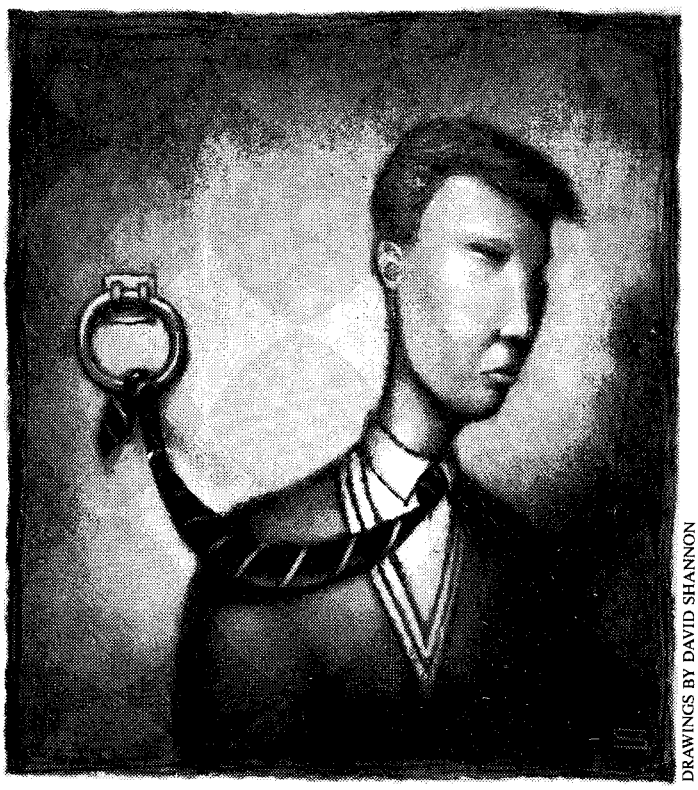
In a few moments, President Reagan was to sign into law a bill requiring all states to adopt a uniform minimum drinking age of 21 within two years or lose 10 percent of their Federal highway funds. The measure had sailed through Congress, as politicians in both parties, sensitive to election-year pressures, vied to ingratiate themselves with MADD and other elements of the antiliquor lobby. Even the President abandoned his usual devotion to the principle of states' rights and gave this particular example of Federal coercion his blessing, praising the legislation as "a simple measure that will save thousands of young lives."

But the drinking-age bill is a hoax, a cynical attempt to use young adults as scapegoats for a complex national problem. The significance of the law lies not in its potential impact on statistics for drunk driving (which many experts believe will be largely unaffected, given the probability of mass disobedience) but in the willingness of members of Congress to sacrifice the rights of young people. Unfortunately, this episode is merely the latest sortie in a campaign to restrict the rights of adults under 21 years of age and adolescents—a counterrevolution, in effect, which threatens important gains young people made during the late 1960s and the 1970s.

The Administration's recent efforts to hamper the ability of teen-agers to obtain contraceptives illustrates the seriousness of the rollback. Under the guise of upholding parental authority, the Department of Health and Human Services issued a regulation requiring family-planning clinics receiving Federal funds to notify parents of patients under 18 who request birth control pills or other contraceptives. Administration officials persisted in trying to implement this "squeal rule" despite massive evidence that it would increase the already alarming number of teen-age pregnancies. The department withdrew the regulation only after it was struck down by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Urged on by right-wing groups, the President may seek legislation this year overturning the court's ruling.

Hostility toward the legal rights of minors is emerging over other issues as well. In connection with a case pending before the Supreme Court, the Justice Department has filed a brief that advocates giving local school districts wide latitude to search students for weapons or illicit drugs. A victory for the government in the case would virtually negate the Fourth Amendment's guarantees against unreasonable searches and seizures as they pertain to teen-age students. The Supreme Court, too, has exhibited an insensitivity toward juvenile rights in recent years. In 1979 the Court upheld a Massachusetts law requiring "immature" minors seeking abortions to obtain either parental consent or a court order asserting their maturity, and during the 1982-83 term a majority reaffirmed that position with respect to a Missouri statute—the only substantive judicial restrictions on abortion rights the Supreme Court has upheld since issuing its landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling, in 1973.

Equally alarming is the Court's decision, during its most recent session, allowing state authorities to impose pretrial detention in juvenile criminal cases, a significant departure from the attitude exhibited toward the due process rights of minors in the previous two decades. A series of decisions throughout that period affirmed various constitutional protections for juveniles accused of unlawful behavior, among them: the right to an attorney, the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and the requirement that guilt be proved beyond a reasonable doubt with regard to serious offenses. Although law-enforcement officials defend pretrial detention as necessary to keep dangerous criminals off the



DRAWINGS BY DAVID SHANNON

Ted Galen Carpenter, a public policy analyst, has written for The Wall Street Journal *and other publications.*

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streets, evidence presented in a recent PBS documentary, *Old Enough To Do Time*, casts doubt on that rationale. The filmmakers found that many states use pretrial detention to hold minors accused of petty crimes—"status offenses," such as truancy or sexual promiscuity—which would not be illegal for an adult. Teen-age defendants were imprisoned for an average of three weeks without trial, while adults accused of similar conduct could routinely obtain bail or would not even be charged. Since juvenile detention facilities harbor some truly dangerous offenders and are characterized by the same violence and sexual molestation prevalent in adult prisons, indiscriminate pretrial incarceration may pose a serious threat to safety as well as to individual civil rights.

Other restrictions that disappeared during the 1960s seem to be making a comeback. Communities as diverse as Detroit and Flower Mound, Texas, have recently passed curfew laws or revived long-moribund ones. Even school dress codes, which once seemed extinct, are back in vogue, with consequences as ridiculous as they are lamentable. Consider a recent episode in Azle, Texas, a suburb of Fort Worth, where an eighth-grade student was suspended for having a mustache, in violation of the school district's dress code. The boy's parents took the matter before the school board, contending that the illicit facial hair was not a mustache but merely "peach fuzz." Board members agonized for two meetings before deciding that a little pubescent facial hair does not a mustache make. No one stopped to consider whether school authorities have the right to impose such arbitrary standards of personal grooming on their charges.

The array of restraints on teen-age minors and young adults share certain common features. They use stereotypes to characterize the behavior and maturity level of young people. They assume collective responsibility, or collective guilt, restricting all members of the group because a minority of them act in an undesirable manner. Consider the campaign to establish a uniform minimum drinking age. Proponents cite studies showing that 18-to-21-year-olds are involved in 16 percent of alcohol-related automobile fatalities, a percentage substantially higher than that group's portion of the total driving population. Therefore, they contend, people at that age cannot handle alcohol responsibly. "There is nothing magical about being able to drink at 18," asserted Milo Kirk, president of the Dallas chapter of MADD. "The statistics tell the story."

But most drivers in that age bracket, like their elders, never drive when they're drunk. Why, then, must all suffer punishment? Richard Emery, an attorney for the New York Civil Liberties Union, argued during an appearance on ABC's *Nightline*, "We shouldn't discriminate against millions of 18-to-21-year-olds when we're dealing with about 1,000 deaths or so a year [averted by raising the drinking age]." Indeed, there is a more tenable case for prohibiting males of any age from purchasing alcoholic beverages, since they are more likely to become involved in a drunk-driving incident than women between the ages of 18 and 21, whose drunk-driving arrest rates and alcohol-related accident rates fall significantly below the national average.

Like other prejudices, that against the young serves to alleviate the frustration adults suffer in the face of urgent though perplexing problems. Blaming "kids" presents easy solutions to the difficulties that have bedeviled our society: violent crime, the deteriorating quality of public education, alcohol and drug abuse.

The aging of America makes today's youth even more vulnerable to attack. Unfortunately for young people of the 1980s, the baby boom of the postwar years was followed by a baby bust. That, combined with longer life spans, has produced a significantly older population, making the youthful minority more susceptible to discrimination. Compounding the problem is the inexperience of this age group in collective political action. The only serious youth lobby is the National Student Association, but it is anemic and represents only students at major colleges and universities. No one speaks for the millions of high-school students and working youth. And the generation seems reluctant to question the status quo: when today's youth speaks for itself, it does so in a conservative voice. According to a *New York Times*/CBS News poll, 25 percent of today's 18-to-25-year-olds identify with the Republican Party, as opposed to 11 percent in 1968.

The combination of adverse demographics, political disarray and conservatism bodes ill for reversing the ongoing

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FOOTNOTE ON AN HISTORIC CASE: IN RE ALGER HISS

This just-published booklet by author William A. Reuben identifies 114 factual errors in the Federal District Court of New York's 1982 decision upholding Hiss's conviction for perjury in 1950. This flawed decision, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1983, stands as the last legal word on one of the most celebrated cases in modern history. 1 copy $5, 10 copies $40, 50 copies $150, 100 copies $250. Make checks payable to The Nation Institute and send to "Hiss," The Nation Institute, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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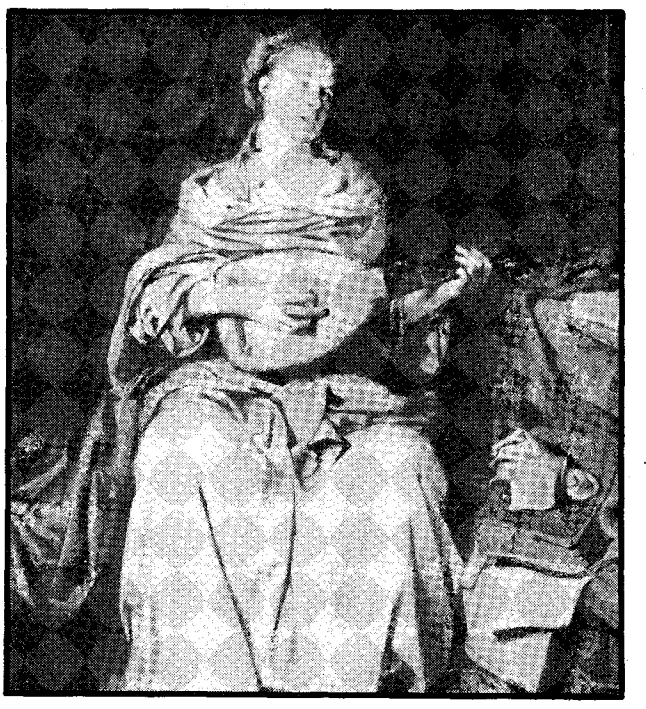

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erosion of rights. Indeed, that trend may accelerate unless young people organize more effectively to restrain legislators who ignore or trample on their interests. They operate at a distinct disadvantage: many of them are not old enough to vote, and the group as a whole lacks the economic power and the influential connections of its elders. Coalition-building might help overcome those obstacles, and surely there will be no shortage of potential allies in the next four years. □

FIRE AT THE GRASS ROOTS

Farm Protests Hit The Statehouses

JIM SCHWAB

Financial disaster is spreading through the nation's grain belt, causing the failure of thousands of small and mid-size farms. The three horsemen of this apocalypse are depressed land values, low commodity prices and high real interest rates on heavy debt burdens. The mounting desperation among America's family farmers has turned the spotlight on the ninety-ninth Congress, where the debate on the 1985 farm bill—and on the Reagan Administration's proclaimed goal of slashing price supports—will be the most fundamental one since the New Deal. Virtually all national organizations representing farmers will be lobbying for Congress to retain price supports at their present levels. Only the conservative American Farm Bureau Federation fully accepts the Administration's "market-oriented" approach.

These same groups will also be directing their fire at state legislatures. In Iowa, where Secretary of Agriculture Robert Lounsberry predicts that bankruptcies, foreclosures and voluntary liquidations will wipe out 11,000 farms in the next two years (10 percent of the state's total), the Farm Unity Coalition has developed a local legislative agenda. It calls on the State Legislature to provide funding for a hot-line service for farmers in financial distress, adopt tax reforms, retain a 1976 state law prohibiting corporations from owning farmland and pass a resolution urging Congress to back higher commodity price supports.

With some variations, progressive farm groups and coalitions in other states are aggressively pushing their demands for help and reform. In addition to the usual lobbying, many groups have utilized more dramatic methods of bringing the farmers' plight to legislators' attention. This month in Des Moines, the Farm Unity Coalition plans to place crosses, symbolizing the "death" of 4,000 family farms in the past two years, on the Statehouse lawn. The coalition has planted them at county courthouses, and last month it sent distressed farmers to apply for food stamps en masse. In Worthington, Minnesota, a December 15 rally attracted 1,200 farmers, according to Brewster farmer Bobbi Polzine, one of its organizers. It included three-minute "testimonies" by representatives from Minnesota's rural communities about the effects of the farm crisis.

High on farm groups' agendas in several states is legislation declaring a moratorium on foreclosures. Such measures were taken by twenty-five states during the Great Depression. Minnesota enacted a limited moratorium two years ago which allows a one-year redemption period after a farm is foreclosed, during which the owner can reclaim it by cleaning up the back debt. Although they expect heavy opposition from bankers, groups like Minnesota COACT (Citizens' Organizations Acting Together) are seeking to strengthen the law so that it includes chattel loans and provides time for restructuring debt. (Actually, the redemption provision is seldom a realistic option for foreclosed farmers.)

While prospects for the passage of a moratorium law this year are slender, the idea is spreading in Iowa. Jerome Hickman, president of the North Dakota American Agriculture Movement, says he thinks such a law will become a high priority for his group. Reg Pityer of the Wisconsin Farm Unity Alliance reports that groups including the Wisconsin Farmers Union will definitely lobby for one in his state. Indiana COACT farm activist Philip Bright foresees a bill extending the nominal redemption period in that state. Such a bill passed both houses of Indiana's Legislature last year in different forms, only to be lost in a more conservative conference committee.

With large numbers of farms being forced onto the auction block and depressed land values the result, family farm advocates see a potential invasion of Midwest agriculture by corporate capital. Several states have laws, passed within the last decade, that prohibit or severely limit large corporations from owning farms. In November 1982, 56 percent of Nebraska voters approved such a measure—Initiative 300, a state constitutional amendment— despite a $500,000 campaign mounted by the opposition.

These relatively recent laws will be the targets of aggressive lobbying drives. In Iowa, for instance, a recent report on the state's declining cattle industry, written by the consulting firm Cattle-Fax for the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, suggests weakening the state's Family Farm Protection Act to make room for corporate-owned feedlots. A number of bankers are also advocating changes to allow an influx of corporate capital, which they say would bolster land values. The conservative chorus is not unanimous, however. Iowa State University agricultural economist Neil Harl, for example, believes Iowa farmers are too vulnerable for such changes now.

Nebraska groups are also bracing for a possible attack on their law, but since it took the form of a constitutional amendment, voters would have to approve any change. In Indiana, COACT plans to push the Legislature to restrict corporate ownership of farmland, a measure opposed by the State Farm Bureau. Other groups behind the effort, Bright

Jim Schwab is working on a book about the farm crisis, to be published later this year, and is doing a study on farm credit for the Iowa State Legislature.

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says, are Citizen Action Coalition of Indiana, the National Farmers Organization, Indiana Farmers Union, Women Involved in Farm Economics and the American Agriculture Movement. Those groups are also pushing to make the office of Secretary of Agriculture elective, thus removing it from the control of the lieutenant governor.

What most state-level farm alliances and coalitions see as the fundamental issue in the farm crisis, however, is farm prices. Groups in Wisconsin and Iowa plan to lobby for resolutions "memorializing" Congress to take measures to raise farm prices, much as some legislatures did in the 1930s, says Carol Hodne, staff director of the Minneapolis-based North American Farm Alliance. Recent figures from the Department of Agriculture show that since 1977, farmers' production expenditures have increased by 64 percent, while farm prices have increased by only 37 percent. The farm price ratio has been under 100 every month since January 1981, according to the same figures. U.S.D.A. subsidies, in effect, have become the only source of overall net income for American farmers.

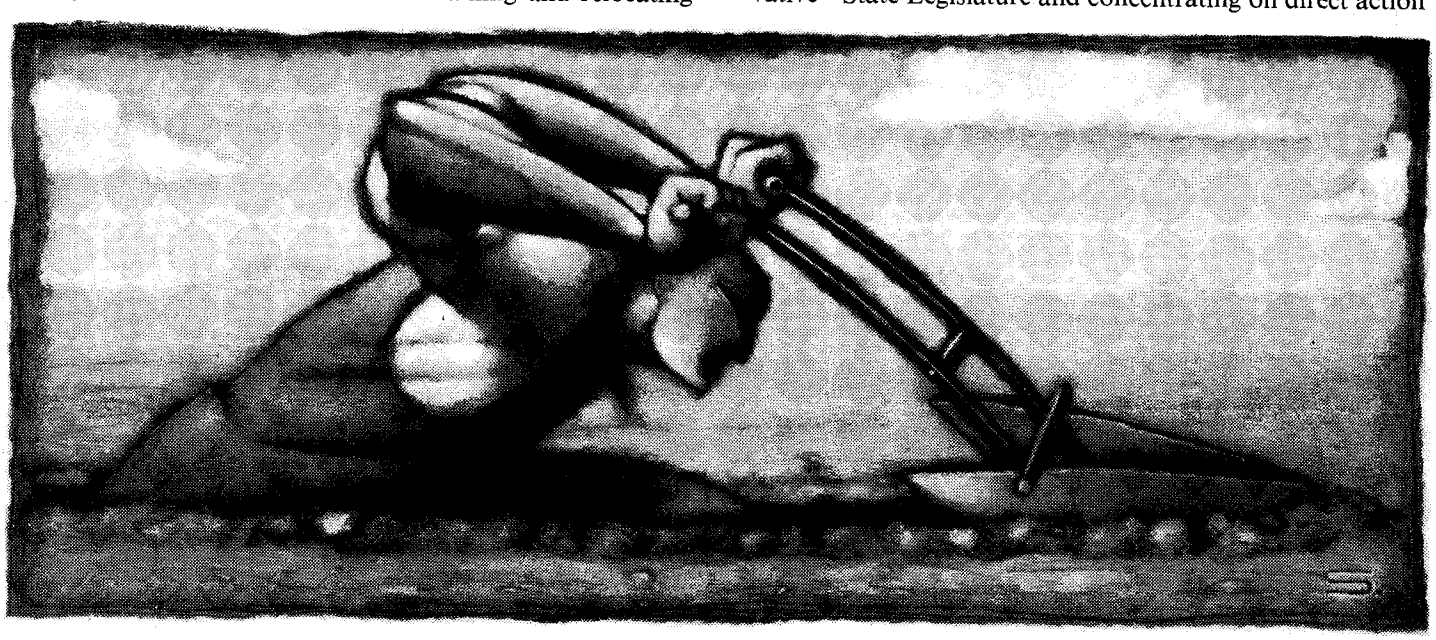
The farm coalitions thus argue that restoring profit through higher prices is the only realistic way to allow farmers to pay off their massive debt load, which stands at $212 billion nationally. Last November at the Midwestern Governors' Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, with over 600 farmers in attendance, wheat growers emphasized their support for a program that would substantially raise loan rates (the price level set by the government in determining its loans for a given commodity) and raise target prices (the level at which the market outstrips government price supports).

Without higher prices the prospects are bleak indeed. If present trends continue, says University of Nebraska economist Larry Swanson, towns of fewer than 1,000 people will be doomed. Most economists estimate that for every seven farmers who leave the land, one small business will go under, and some are beginning to make more pessimistic predictions. The Minnesota Department of Economic Security office in Worthington, serving a five-county area, recently estimated that the cost of retraining and relocating displaced farmers in its region in 1985 will be $3 million. According to a study conducted by Iowa State University's Cooperative Extension Service last summer, the level of rural unemployment in eight counties in the southwest part of that state is 18.5 percent—not 6.5 percent, as Iowa's Job Service Department has reported. As the social and economic costs mount, state budget makers throughout the Midwest are seeing economic development dreams undermined and their tax bases diminished. The Reagan Administration's plans to gut most farm price supports only reinforces a growing and pervasive pessimism.

Not all farm groups are willing to trust Congress to come up with a solution on price issues. Minnesota COACT has been promoting a law that would set minimum prices throughout the state. The proposal would set a floor of 80 percent of parity on major commodity prices as soon as a sufficient number of other states have passed identical laws, so that 60 percent of a given commodity would be controlled. Under the COACT proposal the price of corn, for instance, would rise from around $2.50 per bushel in most areas to $4.28 per bushel. Since farmers get an average of only 28 cents of the retail food dollar, advocates of price supports insist consumers would be affected only marginally by such increases. In the bargain, it would restore economic health to a number of related industries, they say. Mike Laidlaw of Minnesota COACT expects at least a two-year campaign.

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement also plans a minimum price campaign, though a similar effort failed in 1983. In North Dakota, Hickman foresees a push for minimum price legislation. Groups in other states are less enthusiastic. A major drawback, they contend, is that a high degree of regional solidarity is required for the approach to succeed. Then there are legal questions—for example, such laws could be an unconstitutional restraint of trade.

On the fringes of the grain belt there are signs of frustration with the legislative process. In Ohio, a largely industrial state, Joe Chrastil, a multistate COACT organizer, reports the Family Farm Movement is "giving up" on the "conservative" State Legislature and concentrating on direct action



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against farm foreclosures. In most states, however, farm groups will continue to employ both direct action and lobbying as complementary strategies. However, the balance is slowly shifting from working within the system to activism outside it. □

SLENDER THREADS

People Who Are Changing Things

ANN MORRISSETT DAVIDON, ELSA DIXLER, HOWARD J. EHRLICH

All over the United States people are organizing to protest against American foreign policy in Central America and to make nuclear war less likely. From the Winooski Forty-four in Vermont to Voting POWER volunteers in Tulare, California, local activists are making a difference. Their stories provide slender threads of hope in a dark season. Here are five of them. We will print others from time to time.

—The Editors

The Votegetters

Under the slogan "Justice for All," an organization in Oakland, California, called Voting POWER (Voting for Peace and Organized to Win Economic Rights) registered enough California voters to make a difference in several Congressional races last fall. In the Thirty-sixth Congressional District, which encompasses San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, Voting POWER helped defeat conservative Republican challenger John Paul Stark, who drew only 43 percent of the vote although President Reagan carried the district by 65 percent. Incumbent Representative George Brown Jr. called it "the best campaign we ever had," thanks to Voting POWER and other groups. In Voting POWER's home district, 350 volunteers got out the vote for Representative Ronald V. Dellums on Election Day. He garnered 61 percent of the vote.

In addition to the San Bernardino, Riverside and Oakland efforts, Voting POWER mobilized its workers in Tulare and Kern Counties, among the poorest in the nation, and registered 16,000 voters, many of them agricultural laborers. In Oxnard, a tough, segregated town, and outlying areas it signed up 12,000 in conjunction with unions and Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition.

Voting POWER organizers rely on personal contact rather than expensive television advertising to reach potential voters. In the Thirty-sixth District there are only nine full-time staffers and fifteen hard-core members, yet according to regional director Ben Safir, they talked to as many as 30,000 people face to face in the course of the campaign. Voting POWER also gets its message across through bumper stickers and posters.

It reaches low-income voters by talking about the issues they care about: the Reagan assault on social services, women's economic rights, safe communities. It also emphasizes the connection between economic issues and defense spending, pressuring members of Congress to vote against the MX missile and for a nuclear weapons freeze. Voting POWER's biggest challenge, Safir says, is helping low-income people overcome their bitterness toward the system and their sense of isolation. The group claims to have learned its organizing methods from the United Farm Workers and Women Against Violence Against Women.

For the immediate future, staff members are analyzing Congressional voting records to find swing votes, especially on U.S. policy in Central America. They are also looking for specific legislative battles where their support can be crucial. For the long term, Voting POWER hopes to organize chapters on a precinct-to-precinct basis around the state and to develop neighborhood advocates who can mobilize voters in the event of political emergencies. It is also exploring the possibility of mounting a ballot initiative for a tax to fund child-care facilities.

For more information, write: Voting POWER, 5825 Telegraph Avenue #53, Oakland, CA 94609. E.D.

The Winooski Forty-four

Last November 16, a Vermont jury acquitted twenty-six peace activists who had been charged with trespass after participating in a sit-in at the Winooski office of Senator Robert Stafford in March. (They were trying to pressure Stafford, a moderate Republican, to hold a public meeting on U.S. policy in Central America; he later voted against funding the Nicaraguan *contras*.) The verdict, which the State of Vermont will not appeal, represents one of the few times that the so-called necessity defense has been accepted in a U.S. court.

Usually judges refuse to allow expert testimony about the foreign policy dangers that activists say compelled them to break the law, as in the Plowshares cases, discussed in the next item. But after lawyers for the Winooski Forty-four, as the entire group is known, and the State's Attorney agreed to a group trial using the necessity defense, Judge Frank Mahady allowed expert testimony and, at the trial's end, instructed the jury that the United States government is bound by international law. (Although the United States has signed treaties making international law binding in its courts, most judges do not give them credence.)

The expert witnesses in Winooski included former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Prof. Richard Falk of Princeton University, who explained the principles of international law; historian Howard Zinn; and two former employees of the Central Intelligence Agency, who testified about covert operations in Nicaragua.

Members of the Winooski group see the decision as a milestone in the campaign to win acceptance of interna-

Ann Morrissett Davidon is a writer, critic and peace activist living in Haverford, Pennsylvania. Howard J. Ehrlich is a writer and sociologist who produces "The Great Atlantic Radio Conspiracy," the largest circulating leftist radio program in the country.

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tional law in U.S. courts and to protest U.S. military involvement in Central America. E.D.

Plowshares Update

Fifteen Plowshares activists were imprisoned during 1984, and more await trial or the results of appeals. Since the Plowshares Eight took their first dramatic direct action, hammering and pouring blood on missile nose cones at General Electric's King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, plant in 1980, group members have staged more than a dozen nonviolent attacks on nuclear missiles and delivery systems.

Demonstrations and arrests have continued in King of Prussia and at G.E.'s Philadelphia plant. Last January 30 four activists, including a decorated Vietnam War veteran who teaches psychology at the University of Delaware, entered the King of Prussia plant and poured containers of their blood on the walls and on test equipment. Last October 1, five people hammered on Trident submarine missile tubes at General Dynamics' Electric Boat facility in Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The five, who call themselves Trident 2 Plowshares, await trial.

The Plowshares defense—expert testimony to establish the imminent danger of nuclear war and the necessity for antiwar demonstrations—got a mixed reception in the courts last year. In February, the Pennsylvania Superior Court overturned the conviction of the Plowshares Eight in part because expert testimony on nuclear war had not been allowed in their 1981 trial. That decision has been appealed to the State Supreme Court; no ruling is expected until spring. At the December 1983 trial of the Plowshares activists who entered the AVCO Systems Division in Wilmington, Massachusetts, and destroyed a testing device for the Pershing 2 missile, expert witnesses were called, but jury members were instructed not to consider that testimony in reaching their verdict. The seven defendants were found guilty; five are appealing the decision.

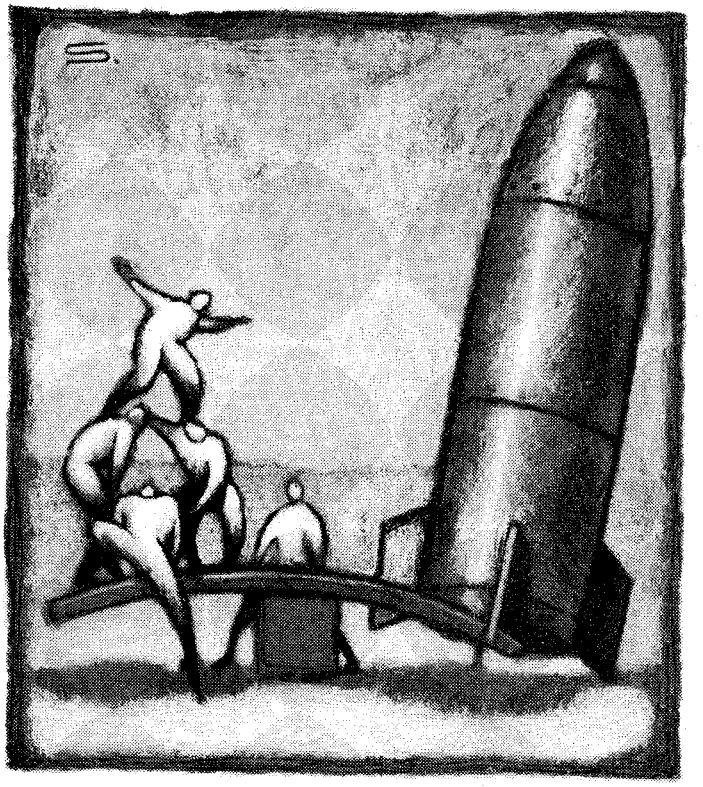
Several Plowshares activists received harsh sentences last year. In the midsummer trial of a group that had assaulted B-52 aircraft capable of carrying cruise missiles at Griffiss Air Force Base in New York, sentences of two and three years in prison were handed out to the defendants, one of whom was former nun Liz McAlister Berrigan. The Pershing Plowshares Eight, who protested at a Martin Marietta plant in Orlando, Florida, last Easter will go to jail for three years. Their trial in July was the first Federal prosecution on behalf of a private contractor [see Jim Schwartz, "A Conspiracy of Conscience," *The Nation*, December 8, 1984]. Despite the prospect of long prison sentences, Plowshares members say they will not be deterred from further acts of Luddism against the war machine. A.M.D.

Nuclear Boycott Campaign

Eighty cities and counties in the United States have declared themselves nuclear-free zones by ordinance, town meeting or referendum, and more campaigns are under way. To date, however, Takoma Park, Maryland, and Amherst, Massachusetts, are the only municipalities in the country to have called for the disinvestment of city funds in the stock of nuclear weapons manufacturers. And only Takoma Park, Amherst and Hoboken, New Jersey, refuse to do business with any firm that, as the Takoma Park ordinance puts it, is "knowingly or intentionally engaged in the development, research, testing, evaluation, production, maintenance, storage, transportation, and/or disposal of nuclear weapons or their components." Albert Donnay and Max Obuszewski, the directors of Nuclear Free America (N.F.A.), a clearinghouse and resource center for free-zone organizers, expect the number of zones to double in 1985. And many cities, they say, will follow Takoma Park's lead.

Municipalities that do so will face the problem of defining who is a nuclear weapons producer or supplier. For example, should the Ford Motor Company, which doesn't produce nuclear weapons systems but does build trucks designed to transport and launch Pershing 2 missiles, be boycotted? Some electronics firms manufacture systems that can guide or launch either nuclear or conventional weapons. Then there are producers who turn out goods, from nuts and bolts to paint, that are purchased by the Pentagon for use in nuclear weapons. N.F.A. says a supplier that knows its products are being so used should be boycotted.

Cities that boycott nuclear weapons producers need to find alternative suppliers for many common items. For example, what kind of light bulbs do you buy when General Electric, Westinghouse and G.T.E. (Sylvania) all contribute to nuclear weapons production? After considerable search, N.F.A. located two American brands, made by Marvel and Balklamp, as well as Polish and Hungarian bulbs that fit the bill. Then, last summer, Takoma Park's police insisted that only G.E. and Motorola made police radios that broadcast on the frequency they had been using. Detective work by the Mayor's office unearthed an alternative supplier whose



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equipment was $50,000 cheaper; the catch was that the police had to change frequencies.

Not all alternative suppliers charge less than the larger, weapons-contracting firms, of course. Headlights, for example, cost a lot more when they're not made by nuclear weapons suppliers. "You have to expect to pay for peace," sighed Obuszewski, who had just replaced his car's lights.

N.F.A. publishes a list of the top fifty nuclear weapons contractors. For a copy and further information, write: Nuclear Free America, 2521 Guilford Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21218. H.J.E.

The White Train

For twenty years a special white train chugged out of the Department of Energy's Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas, where components for nuclear warheads are assembled, carrying its deadly cargo. Two years ago, antinuclear activists began monitoring its travels, and since then, thousands of people in more than 200 towns and cities have demonstrated along the route. The three-to-five-day trip from Amarillo to the train's usual destinations—the Trident submarine base at Bangor, Washington, and the Charleston Naval Weapons Station in Charleston, South Carolina—is usually marked by thirty to forty vigils, sometimes accompanied by acts of civil disobedience. The Department of Energy responded last fall by painting the train. Now its cars are, variously, blue, green, brown, maroon and charcoal gray. But the train is still readily identifiable, in part because several cars have turrets from which heavily armed guards peer out. People who live near the routes the train takes can learn more about the "white train" protests from the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, 16159 Clear Creek Road NW, Poulsbo, WA 98370. E.D.

Ethiopia

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

food from rebel-controlled areas in Eritrea and Tigré in order to starve the insurgents into submission. Thousands of noncombatants there have died from hunger.

Unfortunately, the United States is tacitly abetting this use of famine as a weapon. In an interview last March, Hunter Farnham, a senior official with the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.), said that famine victims in areas not controlled by the Ethiopian government are "really over a barrel in terms of the U.S. being able to help them directly." He added, "I can tell you that we're quite concerned about this situation, and we'd like to be more responsive to the noncombatants who are really suffering the most." Although Farnham implied that the problem is a logistical one, it is political. The Reagan Administration is attempting to woo Ethiopia away from the Soviet Union, so it has been reluctant to provide direct aid to famine victims living in rebel-controlled areas. So far the United States has pledged 210,000 tons of food to Ethiopia, the largest amount of famine relief in our history. But 90 percent of all international assistance to Ethiopia is being channeled to areas under government control and is thus subject to the junta's direction.

Who are the insurgents and why are they fighting? Historically, Ethiopia's forty-odd ethnic groups have been oppressed by the Amhara tribe, which continues to control the central government. Over the past decade, however, a number of armed resistance movements have emerged. The Tigré People's Liberation Front (T.P.L.F.), established in 1975, seeks a decentralized popular government to represent equally all the nationalities within Ethiopia.

Although government troops occupy nine major towns in Tigré, the T.P.L.F. holds more than 85 percent of the rural areas. In the villages under its control, the front has organized People's Councils which have implemented land reform, built schools and clinics, and provided agricultural assistance and local security. Because of those tangible benefits, many peasants in rebel-held areas are sympathetic to the front.

Civil conflict has also raged for more than two decades in the Pennsylvania-size territory of Eritrea, which is coveted by otherwise landlocked Ethiopia for its coast along the Red Sea. Ever since Emperor Haile Selassie's annexation of Eritrea in 1962, an independence movement has fought against successive regimes in Addis Ababa, but after twenty-three years the conflict remains stalemated. Today, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (E.P.L.F.) occupies about 85 percent of the province outside the major cities, and it has established extensive administrative structures in the areas under its control. Although massive government offensives have hurled the rebels back temporarily, the army has failed to occupy the countryside.

After a coup ended Haile Selassie's forty-four-year reign, in September 1974, a Marxist junta known as the Derg ("committee") took power, and following a bloody power struggle, Colonel Mengistu became its supreme leader. Because of the Derg's human rights violations and communist leanings, U.S.-Ethiopian relations became increasingly strained, and in 1977 the Soviet Union replaced the United States as Ethiopia's superpower ally and weapons supplier. Since then, the Russians have provided the Derg an estimated $2.5 billion in sophisticated weaponry (including MI-24 helicopter gunships and MIG-23 fighter-bombers), along with some 1,400 military advisers, and Cuba has supplied 3,000 troops.

Today, nearly half Ethiopia's national budget goes to support a highly mechanized army of 306,000 troops, one of the largest military establishments in sub-Saharan Africa. The civil wars in Eritrea and Tigré are costing the Derg approximately $500,000 a day, according to *The New York Times*, yet despite the huge investment of blood and treasure, victory has remained elusive.

A series of military setbacks have led the Derg to resort to increasingly brutal forms of warfare, including scorched-earth tactics. In the spring of 1983, the Ethiopian Army launched major offensives in Eritrea and Tigré which left

Jonathan B. Tucker is a Boston-based journalist who writes on international affairs.

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massive destruction in their wake. According to Gayle Smith, a freelance journalist who toured Tigré on foot that year, the Ethiopian government deliberately sought to bring about a famine in the north as a way of weakening the rebels. "The 1983 offensive was launched in western Tigré—the only part of the province where a grain surplus was achieved—and it occurred right after the harvest," Smith says. "You can draw your own conclusions."

Government forces burned grain supplies, fields and pasturelands using incendiary bombs, cut down fruit orchards, shot domestic animals and destroyed public schools and health clinics built by the T.P.L.F. A similar military offensive in Eritrea contributed to the famine there by disrupting planting in the southwestern part of the territory bordering the Sudan. The Ethiopian Air Force also bombed towns and villages on market days, terrorizing the inhabitants. "It's basically the old strategic-hamlet theory," Grassroots International's Connell says, drawing a parallel to U.S. counterinsurgency methods in Vietnam. "The government has used terror attacks and hunger to drive the people out of the countryside and into official reception centers in the main towns, which are held by Ethiopian government forces. The goal is not so much to control the peasants as to deny aid to the guerrillas."

Evidence has emerged recently that the Ethiopian government is also diverting emergency food to the army and militia. In October the government-held town of Lalibela was overrun in a T.P.L.F.-led attack. According to three Western relief workers there, the rebels discovered large quantities of international food aid inside a government military garrison.

The deteriorating security situation, combined with communications and transportation problems, have meant that large areas of Eritrea and Tigré are cut off from famine-relief efforts. During last spring and summer the key roads to the north were often impassable because of fighting. Only a few food convoys got through, accompanied by armed escorts. Moreover, voluntary agencies working under the auspices of the Ethiopian government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (R.R.C.) can distribute food only in official centers set up in the vicinity of government-controlled garrison towns, such as Mekele, the capital of Tigré.

"It's very difficult to reach the rural areas through the regular channels," admits James Deharpporte of Catholic Relief Services, which is working in Eritrea and Tigré in cooperation with the R.R.C. "The famine and the war situation have caused people to come to the urban areas where we have set up feeding centers, and they are the major beneficiaries."

The only organizations providing direct aid to famine victims in rural areas of Eritrea and Tigré are two indigenous groups affiliated with the rebels. The Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) coordinates its activities with the E.P.L.F. but is administered independently; the association's officials say they provide food to all people in need regardless of whether they support the guerrillas. So far, ERA has managed an effective but seriously underfinanced relief effort in behalf of the 2 million Eritreans in danger of starvation.

Similarly, the Relief Society of Tigré (REST), a voluntary agency founded in 1978, is the only humanitarian organization operating in the guerrilla-controlled areas there. REST's administration and personnel are separate from the T.P.L.F.'s, although REST officials cooperate with the front and with the People's Councils in the villages.

According to Gayle Smith, ERA and REST "are so efficient that they could be models for disaster relief anywhere in the world." The bulk of the food and supplies they allot is contributed by European church organizations and a handful of U.S. private voluntary agencies working through the Sudan, including Grassroots International, Lutheran World Relief (New York City), Mercy Corps International (Portland, Oregon), Direct Relief International (Sacramento, California), the Mennonite Central Committee (Akron, Pennsylvania) and, since November, Oxfam America (Boston).

The U.S. government provides small amounts of indirect aid to ERA and REST through those private relief groups and the International Committee for the Red Cross. But although the Ethiopian government reaches about half the famine victims, and ERA and REST the other half, the rebel-associated groups have far less food at their disposal. "International aid is running 20-to-1 in favor of the government," Smith says. Many donors have declined to work with ERA and REST for fear either that the Ethiopian government might restrict the donors' programs or that food given to the agencies might end up feeding rebel soldiers. So far, however, there is no evidence that food aid from ERA or REST has been diverted to the fronts.

Because the amounts of food and supplies reaching the two organizations have been so small, famine victims in remote villages of Eritrea and Tigré must travel to feeding centers in the government-controlled towns. Those who sur-

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vive the journey are often badly treated, according to Chris Cartter, associate director of Grassroots International, who toured the T.P.L.F.-controlled areas of Tigré in November and interviewed a number of migrating famine victims. He heard accounts of intimidation, harassment and even physical violence suffered at the hands of Ethiopian officials. "Several refugees told me that officials in the government feeding centers asked them for an I.D. card, such as membership in a farmers' union," he says. "Because people from T.P.L.F.-controlled areas don't have I.D.s, they were told to go to the back of the line or to come back the next day. Some were denied food and even beaten."

Another source of the refugees' fear and mistrust of the official famine-relief program is a new government policy. In November, the Derg began implementing what it called "a long-term solution" to the famine, which consists of resettling peasants from Eritrea and Tigré to areas that are supposedly more fertile in the southern provinces of Welega and Ilubabor. More than 70,000 people from Tigré have been moved to the south in trucks, buses and Soviet Antonov transport aircraft, and the Ethiopian government plans to resettle a total of 1.5 million people there by the end of the year. In many cases, peasants have been removed from their ancestral lands against their will. According to a recent report in *The Christian Science Monitor*, villages in Tigré have been surrounded by troops at night and their inhabitants herded into trucks which take them to the new settlements.

Mistreatment in the feeding centers and forced resettlement polices, together with ERA and REST's inability to provide enough food, have led to a massive exodus from the rebel-held areas. Cartter reports that starving peasants are leaving their villages at a rate of 10,000 a week for the refugee camps across the Sudanese border. New arrivals at the border number around 120,000, and some 60,000 migrants are making their way through western Tigré. Although REST has set up dozens of checkpoints along the route to provide the refugees with food, water and basic medical care, thousands have died.

Meanwhile, the fighting has intensified in Eritrea and Tigré. Cartter, who witnessed a fire fight between rebels and government forces near the Tigréan town of Aresa in late November, notes that 50,000 troops have been added to the Ethiopian Army as a result of the junta's new policy of conscription. According to the vice chairman of the T.P.L.F., the front expects a major government offensive in the near future and views the Derg's resettlement plan as part of a strategy to depopulate Eritrea and Tigré so as to further weaken the insurgents.

On December 3, Ethiopian government aircraft strafed the Tigréan town of Shellalo, killing eighteen people and wounding fifty-six. "Shellalo lies on the road to Kassala, the principal migration route out of Tigré and the only food lifeline into the province," Cartter says. "If the Ethiopian government seals off the road to Kassala, it will mean certain death for hundreds of thousands of people within weeks."

Officially, the United States allocates food aid according to need, regardless of the political orientation of the recipient country. "A hungry child knows no politics," A.I.D. administrator M. Peter McPherson said recently. But critics contend that U.S. emergency food aid has in fact been heavily influenced by political considerations, with disproportionate amounts of aid going to countries that are either of strategic value to the United States or that align themselves with U.S. interests [see Richard Falk on page 52].

Because of Ethiopia's strategic location on the Horn of Africa, within striking distance of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, it has long been a focus of geopolitical rivalry between the superpowers. Under Haile Selassie, the United States had access to the Eritrean Red Sea coast and maintained an important electronic listening post at Kagnew Communications Station in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. Thus, ever since the Carter Administration "lost" Ethiopia to the Russians, the U.S. government has sought by various means to lure the Derg back into the Western camp. Now the Reagan Administration is employing emergency relief as a carrot and stick to achieve its foreign-policy objectives.

The Soviet Union has established a naval anchorage on Eritrea's Dahlak Archipelago and is reportedly installing a missile facility in the area. Those moves have aroused concern in Washington about a new strategic threat on the Horn. The famine has also strengthened the Ethiopian government's military position vis-à-vis the insurgencies in Eritrea and Tigré, possibly opening the way for conquest of the rebel-held territories. Such a development would represent a major strategic advance for the Soviet Union.

Although the Administration began sending emergency food aid to Ethiopia in 1983, the quantities were inadequate to the magnitude of the famine. Not until October 23, when a graphic BBC film of the famine was broadcast on the *NBC Nightly News*, was the American public alerted to the vast human tragedy under way. The shocking images of suffering and death triggered an outpouring of public concern and forced the Reagan Administration to expand its aid program sharply. Yet a plea for increased aid had been made by R.R.C. commissioner Dawit Wolde Giorgis in March, six months earlier. Those months of delay contributed to an untold number of deaths.

The Rev. Charles Elliott, a British relief official, recently charged that the United States and Britain had intentionally delayed large-scale relief assistance to Ethiopia in the belief that widespread famine would trigger the overthrow of the Derg and bring a pro-Western regime to power. (Indeed, a major cause of the coup that ousted Haile Selassie was the Emperor's cover-up of the severe famine of 1972-73 in which more than 200,000 people died. Apparently he had felt that a request for emergency relief would tarnish his international prestige.) But the current famine has had the op-

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posite effect, helping Mengistu tighten his grip on power and strengthening his ideological ties with Moscow. On September 12, the Derg celebrated its tenth anniversary with a $100 million gala and announced the formation of an official state Communist Party.

Despite the strength of Ethiopian-Soviet ties, U.S. policymakers believe that Ethiopia—like Egypt, the Sudan and Somalia—can be induced by large amounts of Western aid to change its political orientation. They contend that the expanded relief effort represents "a threat to Soviet hegemony over Ethiopia," *Time* reported in its November 26 issue.

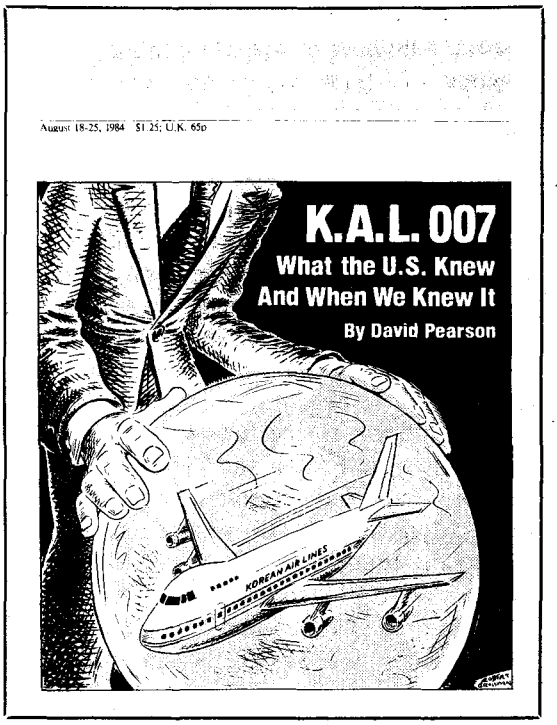
On November 2, the Administration announced that instead of channeling all famine aid through third parties such as voluntary organizations and U.N. agencies, it would send it directly to the Ethiopian R.R.C. The Reagan Administration also launched a propaganda offensive. A.I.D. administrator McPherson compared the United States' generosity with the Soviet Union's meager shipments of food aid and "callous indifference" to the plight of its ally. McPherson's righteous indignation might have been more appropriate if the United States had been less tardy and more balanced in its response to the crisis. In any event, it was a transparent gesture of salesmanship.

Because of the Administration's desire to improve relations with the Derg and eventually to displace the Russians, it has been reluctant to provide large amounts of aid to ERA and REST or to condemn the Derg's ruthless military tactics against rebel-held areas of Eritrea and Tigré. The United States has little incentive to support the movements for self-determination there, since the geopolitical prize it covets is a united Ethiopian Empire with its Eritrean coast intact; a dismembered, weakened Ethiopia would be of little strategic value to either superpower.

To date, Ethiopia has shown few signs of responding to America's courtship. Last month R.R.C. commissioner Giorgis attacked the United States for its belated response to the famine. His remarks drew an angry retort from McPherson, who termed the accusation "a classic example of biting the hand that feeds you." The Reagan Administration may now be hedging its bets—continuing to provide limited aid to ERA and REST in order to apply pressure on the Derg.

Another important variable in the complex political equation is the stability of the Sudan, America's closest ally in the Horn. The regime of President Mohammed Gaafar el-Nimeiry is shaky, and the country is beset by severe drought, a renewed civil war in the south, severe tensions with Ethiopia and the burden of some 700,000 refugees. The influx of an additional 500,000 to 1 million refugees from Eritrea and Tigré could well destabilize the Sudan, creating another opening for Soviet gains in the region. If the United States wishes to stem the massive exodus from Ethiopia, it must provide more food aid to Eritrea and Tigré.

Geopolitical considerations aside, as a first step toward alleviating the enormous human suffering in the two rebel-controlled provinces, all donor governments should send more aid to ERA and REST. "I would never tell the U.S. not to give famine assistance to the Ethiopian government,"



What part did the United States military and intelligence agencies play in the Soviet downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007? David Pearson's exhaustive research in the Aug. 18-25 issue of The Nation leads him, and you, to some shocking conclusions.

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says Dan Connell, "but if it's really humanitarian aid, you have to work where the victims are, and that includes rebel-controlled areas." Most urgently needed are trucks to deliver food that has already arrived. REST has forty trucks, with which it can transport only 1,000 tons of food a month; in order to meet the need, hundreds more are required.

Even with increased relief, however, the suffering in Eritrea and Tigré cannot be dealt with until the fighting stops. One million people in central Tigré are so weak from hunger that they are unable to migrate to the Sudan. They have sold their seeds, tools and oxen, and have no means of production. Unless relief aid can reach them, most will die.

Several aid agencies have proposed an internationally supervised cease-fire that would permit large shipments of grain, medicine and relief supplies across political and military boundaries, including emergency airlifts of food and supplies into the rebel-held zones. Although guerrilla leaders in both territories have offered to negotiate a cease-fire, the Ethiopian government has refused. R.R.C. commissioner Giorgis told *The Washington Post* recently, "Ethiopia will never . . . make a deal with terrorists and secessionists."

Thus it will take an international outcry to pressure the Derg to permit aid to reach the forgotten people of Eritrea and Tigré. "The Ethiopian famine has become caught up in global politics and can only be solved at that level," Cartter says. "If something is not done soon, a lot of people will have blood on their hands." □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 34*)

In January 1983 eight Peruvian journalists from opposition publications were slaughtered in the highland community of Uchuraccay. The government explanation, circulated internationally, was that they were mistaken for guerrillas and killed by local peasants. In the course of the trial, which is still in session, witnesses have testified that members of the armed forces were directly involved and may even have done the killing. The trial judge has stated that high-level government and military officials are implicated. . . .

Unfortunately, the atrocities of the armed forces have not been denounced by President Fernando Belaúnde Terry or by members of his party. It is not strictly true that the President "shelved" an Amnesty International report after one of the alleged victims was found to be alive; he told reporters that he threw the document in the trash can, "where it belonged," when he received it. The victim in question had, in fact, been tortured although he survived. . . .

An institutional framework is emerging in Peru to support the increased repression. Since March 1981 an antiterrorist law has been in effect that defines terrorism so broadly as to be absurd. The President and other members of the governing party are advocating the death penalty for convicted terrorists; the president of the Supreme Court believes that terrorists should be tried by a military tribunal rather than in a civilian court; and the War Minister has stated flatly that suspected terrorists should be "shot without mercy," *and* without trial. . . .

The situation in Peru is complex and particularly confusing when compared with Central America. Missing from most of the articles that appear in the U.S. press is an analysis that goes beyond the dichotomy terrorists (or guerrillas)/armed forces and takes into account the many social and political expressions of the Peruvian people. Through political parties, coalitions, labor unions, neighborhood organizations, human rights groups and federations of family members of the disappeared, there are many voices in Peru that demand a system of government responsive to the basic needs of the majority and propose concrete alternatives. It would be wrong to see a hope for Peru's future in the dogmatic and isolationist Sendero Luminoso. However, the group does represent many of the underlying tensions and unresolved problems of the country and would be best analyzed in that light. . . .

Linda Marguerite Rupert
Ecumenical Committee on the Andes

AMNESTY'S VIEW

New York City

Amnesty International welcomed the article on Peru by Jeanne DeQuine. As reported, the Peruvian government has consistently failed to respond to inquiries from Amnesty International regarding human rights violations. It has indeed shelved the investigation of political executions, disappearances and torture in Peru. The Peruvian government has attacked and denounced Amnesty International as "irresponsible and slanderous" in its reporting and "communist-inspired." Without a commitment from the government for a full investigation of such systematic practices as torture, executions and disappearances, there can be no true and meaningful hope for the promotion of human rights in Peru. *John G. Healey*
Amnesty International USA

DeQUINE REPLIES

Miami

I disagree that my article overemphasized the importance of Sendero Luminoso and underemphasized military abuses. As clearly stated in the piece, "military counterinsurgency measures . . . may, in the long run, pose a greater danger than the guerrillas." The military's reported murder of civilians and alleged Senderistas without charges or trials has underscored a point made by both the left and Sendero—that Peruvian democracy today has a repressive character. The Peruvian government's unwillingness to follow up on reports of human rights abuses has done little to counter that image.

The purpose of the article, however, was not to document human rights violations or to suggest that Sendero's means justify violence by the military and civil guard. Alerts by Amnesty International and Americas Watch have amply described reported excesses by both the military and Sendero.

The point is that Sendero's brief, violent history, combined with the military's excesses, have created a serious threat to the country's institutions, while tossing Peru's impoverished people into the turmoil and horror of rising institutional and personal violence. It is true that military violence is increasing. It is not accurate, however, to minimize the damage—in thousands of lives and millions of dollars—inflicted by terrorists touted as the "Pol Potistas" of Latin America. To dismiss Sendero as a frustrated peasant movement clearly ignores reality.

Unfortunately, the situation in Peru is likely to worsen for two reasons. One is Sendero's five-part strategy, as outlined by imprisoned members: mobilization and armed propaganda, sabotage, generalized revolutionary violence, conquest of support bases and, finally, urban insurrection and destruction of the bourgeois state. That strategy, considered to be in its third phase, offers no hope of diminishing violence in Andean villages or central cities. The second reason is that the position taken by the military, which has conducted its own terrorist campaign of disappearances, massacres and torture against the Peruvian population, will harden.

Given this situation, there can be few good guys; only numerous victims.

Jeanne DeQuine

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Central America
Appearing just after the controversial Kissinger report in January 1984, the special issue on Central America offered a strong refutation of the Administration's views. The arguments still hold. Highlighted by Walter LaFeber's overview, William LeoGrande's analysis of the domestic political fallout and Peter Davis's compelling firsthand report on the Nicaraguan revolution today, the issue is one of the most urgent, informative and important in *The Nation*'s history.

Fifteen Years of the Burger Court
Herman Schwartz and his cadre of twelve leading lawyers and scholars put together an invaluable assessment of the Burger Court. Leaving no stone unturned, the authors scrutinize the last fifteen years of "intense judicial activism" in a thought-provoking manner. No lawyer, student of the courts or concerned citizen should be without this issue.

K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew And When We Knew It
Published on the eve of the first anniversary of the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007, this issue raises serious questions about the U.S. role in the tragedy. After a year of thorough research, author David Pearson concludes that U.S. authorities at the highest level knew the airliner was off course much earlier than they have admitted, and that the questions raised by the official versions of the story can only be resolved by a Congressional inquiry.

The Strange Correspondence of Morris Ernst & John Edgar Hoover, 1939-1964
Harrison E. Salisbury, the award-winning journalist, details how the director of the F.B.I. exploited and debased the confidence of a leading civil libertarian, and in so doing seriously compromised the A.C.L.U. Salisbury draws on some 300 exchanges to document the extent to which the machinations of the "top constable" profaned the democratic process.

Latin America: A Political Guide
An invaluable survey of thirty-three Latin American countries by Penny Lernoux, *The Nation*'s award-winning Latin American correspondent.

El Salvador
A compilation of *Nation* articles on Central America and El Salvador, including an early debunking of the famed "White Paper" by James Petras.

A Letter to America
The Nation January Inauguration issue was devoted entirely to E.P. Thompson's compelling essay on the clear and present danger of nuclear war.

Intervention
Under what conditions, if any, is military (or other) intervention ever justified? An entire issue of *The Nation* on the subject of intervention contains the papers presented at a Conference on Intervention, co-sponsored by *The Nation* and the Columbia University School of International Affairs.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Mixed Motivations

RICHARD FALK

THE QUALITY OF MERCY: Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience. *By William Shawcross. Simon & Schuster. 464 pp. $19.95.*

The hardhearted *Wall Street Journal* has commended the Reagan Administration "for shoving politics aside to go to the aid of a desperate population" in Ethiopia, despite the fact that its ruler is a "Soviet-aligned military dictator." But let us not be fooled by the Administration's humanitarian cover. We can be sure that both politics and altruism have played their part and that there is more to this flow of aid than emergency relief.

Even before Ronald Reagan moved into the White House, the government had introduced politics of a dark variety beneath the banner of famine relief. During Jimmy Carter's Presidency, aid for Cambodia's starving population was cruelly subordinated to the government's anti-Vietnam card. Those geopolitical priorities placed the importance of supplies for the surviving cadres of Pol Pot's army ahead of famine relief for civilian victims, prolonging a devastating and senseless civil war in Cambodia.

Had William Shawcross chosen to tell that sordid story in full detail, *The Quality of Mercy* would have been a fitting sequel to *Sideshow*, his fine exposé of American policy toward Cambodia in the Nixon-Kissinger years. He does narrate, in a muted way, aspects of this further "sideshow" of emergency relief, but his larger design for *The Quality of Mercy* is much more elaborate and less well realized.

At first glance, *The Quality of Mercy* is a critical narrative of the world's response to food shortages in Cambodia since 1979. Somewhat too harshly, I feel, Shawcross castigates the principal relief organizations for their opportunism and incompetence, and for promoting an array of nonhumanitarian goals of which he disapproves.

Richard Falk teaches at Princeton University. He is the author of The Question of Intervention, *forthcoming from Holmes and Meier.*

Of course, any attentive student of international politics should not be shocked by the relative weakness of altruism as a motive, even under the best circumstances. We should know that governments are not alone in manipulating sympathy and that relief agencies, self-righteously proclaiming their moral superiority to standard statecraft, also play on the emotions of their donors by exaggerating the dimensions of potential disaster, and often serve ends that are more political than humanitarian.

In addressing these issues, at least, Shawcross confirms his reputation as a diligent and intelligent investigative journalist. He portrays the organizational and human actors vividly and analyzes well the relationship of relief operations to the overall circumstances in Cambodia. Here is a fascinatingly complex tale of intrigue, inefficiency, organizational jealousy and political manipulation.

But Shawcross's more ambitious intention for his book is conveyed by its subtitle, *Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience. The Quality of Mercy* is a far-reaching indictment of modern conscience. The book begins with an analysis of the way relief agencies, journalists and others were induced to describe the consequences of Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia as comparable to the Nazi Holocaust. For Shawcross this invocation of the Holocaust was a gross distortion of reality and a deliberate manipulation of Western guilt about the inadequate response to Hitler's crimes. In effect, Shawcross accuses the relief agencies of playing on that lingering guilt to secure bigger budgets for their operations.

It should be stressed that Shawcross does not question the criminality of Pol Pot's policies or their catastrophic consequences; he merely contends that several of the relief organizations inflated the numbers. Behind those distortions lie others which have, in Shawcross's view, more serious implications. He insists that Pol Pot's crimes were distinctively and unambiguously Marxist-Leninist in character, and that it was misleading to associate them with the quite different criminality of the Hitler period:

> The constant invocations of Nazism helped to obscure the fact that the Khmer Rouge were a Marxist-Leninist organization and that Tuol Sleng [a Cambodian prison called "An Asian Auschwitz" in which Pol Pot's people tortured and murdered] resembled much more a Stalinist prison than a Nazi concentration camp.

He notes that those killed at Tuol Sleng, aside from being far fewer than those sent to their death at Auschwitz (about 16,000 compared with as many as 4 million), were mainly former comrades "on whom the organization had turned in its revolutionary and chauvinistic ferocity." In other words, they were not a category of humanity like the Jews, declared unfit to live merely as a consequence of their identity. Further, the victims of the Khmer Rouge were tortured, in Stalinist fashion, into "confessing" before being executed by the party they had once served and then allegedly betrayed.

Shawcross insists that this confusion of two types of state criminality was not innocent, and he is particularly careful to charge the left with complicity in it. His indictment recalls Susan Sontag's insistence three years ago that she learned more of Stalin's crimes from *Reader's Digest* than from *The Nation*. In the case of Cambodia, intellectuals on the left *were* initially reluctant to acknowledge the gory realities of Communist rule and tended to dismiss them as C.I.A. plots to discredit the political leadership that followed the collapse of the American presence. According to Shawcross, when the evidence of atrocities became too strong to deny, leftist ideologues attempted to put the moral onus on right-wing fanaticism by associating Cambodia's plight with Hitler's Holocaust. He also charges that those pro-Marxist interpreters sought to restrict all blame to the demented Pol Pot and his entourage and thereby avoid indicting the ideology itself. Shawcross never really gives any hard evidence for these grave charges. As a result, he seems to be carrying on a form of ideological warfare that has the unfortunate effect of shifting attention away from the real victims and the main culprits of the Cambodian tragedy.

Shawcross is exceedingly critical of the Vietnamese, possibly as a consequence of his hostility to the left. He repeatedly accuses them of being more

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interested in obstructing the Khmer Rouge than in allowing food to reach the hungry. He also contends that after a short period of gratitude to their Vietnamese liberators, the Cambodian people began to resent the foreign presence in their country. He charges that the Heng Samrin government in Phnom Penh, almost always referred to by the pejorative term "regime," was staffed by former Khmer Rouge militants, while decent middle-class bureaucrats who had never joined the Communist cause were excluded.

By contrast the U.S. government is treated rather kindly in the book. True, Washington is criticized for using the relief operation to sustain the Khmer Rouge, and for employing its funds and materials to fight the Vietnamese. Nevertheless, Shawcross makes amends for his devastating critique of America in *Sideshow* by suggesting that the United States is now acting out of genuine moral concern and that its political program is legitimate because it accords with the regional consensus in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in its resolve to get the Vietnamese out of Cambodia by any means.

I don't at all fault Shawcross for raising crucial moral and political questions. But it is deeply disturbing that he does so by overstatement and without convincing evidence for his most controversial conclusions. True, the tragedy of Cambodia was misleadingly associated with Hitler's crimes, but was the association really made with deception in mind? I think not. The deliberate mass executions in Cambodia did recall the Nazi antecedent, as did the apparent magnitude of the slaughter. From what we know, Stalin's crimes, while on an immense scale, were different in nature. They are better represented by the remorseless agonies of the gulag, or the cruel displacement and destruction of the kulaks.

Furthermore, the motives and performance of the Vietnamese are not as transparently sinister as Shawcross purports. They did enter Cambodia and free the society from the yoke of Pol Pot; even Shawcross admits that they performed a liberating role. Many informed witnesses, including John Pilger of the *New Statesman*, credit the Vietnamese with great efficiency in food distribution in the early stages of their occupation and support their claim that they diverted food from their own people, who were also in need. In addition,

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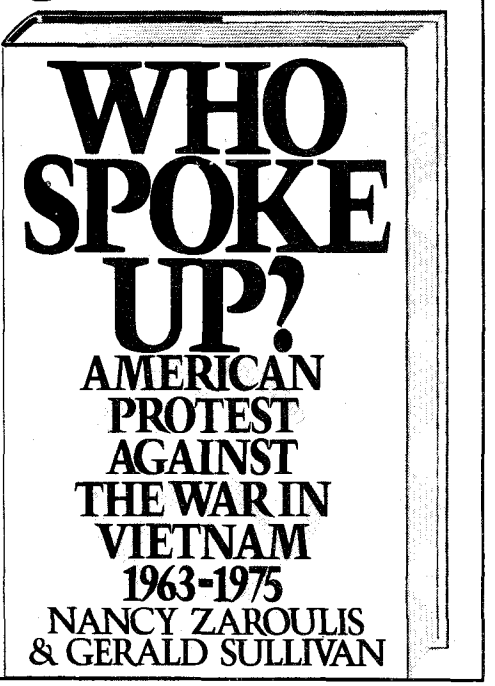

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the Vietnamese had every reason to be suspicious of relief operations and to insist on maintaining their sovereignty over food distribution: in the past, relief operations have had close connections with Western intelligence. The massive American aid effort in Cambodia was deliberately concentrated at the Thai border, in part to keep the civil war going.

Shawcross also argues that the Vietnamese-oriented leadership in Phnom Penh has shown little interest in "a compromise" which would involve exchanging Vietnamese withdrawal for a disarming of the Khmer Rouge and subsequent free elections, but the possibility of such a compromise is never shown. The Vietnamese, and the leaders in Phnom Penh, insist that that is not a serious offer and that Pol Pot's surviving remnant cannot possibly be accepted as a legitimate participant in Cambodia's political life. To condemn the Vietnamese for their long stay may be premature as long as Pol Pot forces are actively fighting to regain power in Cambodia—a course still receiving assistance from such formidable adversaries of Vietnam as China and the United States.

What I find disturbing is that Shawcross seems to be unremittingly harsh, simplistic and one-sided in his assessments. The Vietnamese have suffered for decades at the hands of outsiders. Their insistence on securing a compliant Cambodia, especially after Pol Pot played his own China/U.S.A. card, seems at the very least understandable in geopolitical terms. Their ultimate intentions have yet to be tested, or revealed. It must be remembered that the United States, China and Thailand continue to exert great diplomatic pressure to uphold the fictional legitimacy of the Khmer Rouge's credentials in the United Nations.

Pol Pot may not have been Hitler, but his regime is surely guilty of terror against its own people, killing at least 2 million—about 30 percent of the population. To defend the legitimacy of such a political force must be considered a cruel and immoral perversion. Somehow this perversion is obscured in *The Quality of Mercy* because Shawcross is so keen to settle historical accounts with the left. Or is there something even deeper and more personal at work here? Shawcross begins *The Quality of Mercy* with an extended account of his father's role as Nuremberg prosecutor. True, memory and conscience are linked in the political imagination. But surely the bureaucratic foibles of the relief agencies, which take up the bulk of this long narrative, are not to be confused with the crimes of the outsiders (mainly the United States) and the insiders (mainly the Khmer Rouge) that gave rise to the Cambodian people's ghastly ordeal. Shawcross ended *Sideshow* by concluding that the American role in Cambodia was one that had to be considered under the rubric of criminality. He insisted there that it is woefully insufficient to limit U.S. responsibility to mistakes of judgment or failures of competence. But in *The Quality of Mercy* the misshaping of Cambodian destiny as a consequence of the Vietnam War is not granted the relevance it deserves.

If Shawcross had set out to prove that mixed motives underlie missions of mercy in a world of sovereign states, we could have readily accepted this case as a confirmation of what we already know, or at least suspect. But he implies something more insidious—that the moral hype surrounding relief operations has the general effect of prolonging civil strife and extending the orbit of suffering. He cites emergency aid to Biafra during the Nigerian civil war as further evidence of this "pattern"; yet there is

VIDEO CUISINE

They are weighing the babies again on color television.
They are hanging these small bags of bones up in canvas slings
to determine which ones will receive the dried-milk mush,
the concentrate made out of ground-up trash fish.

For years we have watched them, back-lit by the desert,
these miles of dusty hands holding out goatskins or cups,
their animals dead or dying of rinderpest,
and after the credits come up I continue to sit

through Dinner with Julia, where, in a French fish
poacher big enough for a small brown baby, an
Alaska salmon simmers in a court bouillon.
For a first course, steak tartare to awaken the palate.

With it, Julia suggests a zinfandel. This scene
has a polite, a touristy flavor to it,
and I let it play. But somewhere Oxfam goes on
spooning gluey gruel between the parched lips

of potbellied children, the ones who perhaps can be saved
from kwashiorkor—an ancient Ghanaian word—
though with probable lowered IQs, the voiceover explains,
caused by protein deficiencies linked to the drought

and the drought has grown worse with a gradual increase in herds
overgrazing the thin forage grasses of the Sahel.
This, says the voice, can be laid to the natural greed
of the nomad deceived by technicians digging new wells,

which means (a slow pan of the sand) that the water table has dropped.
And now to Julia's table is borne the resplendent fish.
Always the camera is angled so that the guests look up.
Among them I glimpse that sly Dean, Jonathan Swift.

After the credits come up I continue to sit
with those who are starving to death in a distant nation
squatting, back-lit by the desert, hands out, in my head
and the Dublin Dean squats there too, observing the population

that waits for too little dried milk, white rice, trash fish.
Always the camera is angled so they look up
while their babies are weighed in slings on color television,
look into our living rooms and the shaded rooms we sleep in.

Maxine Kumin

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no evidence that the pattern exists. We should not become so "sophisticated" that we prefer to watch famine take its toll rather than risk the political impurities that inevitably infect relief operations. Most important, we must remember that some political impurities are far worse than others. Unlike Shawcross, I am more critical of the U.S. and Thai governments for their use of relief as a cover for their support of the Khmer Rouge than I am of the Vietnamese and their leaders in Phnom Penh for their efforts to obstruct such support, even if it meant denying food to some of the Cambodian population. Shawcross bitterly criticizes Oxfam for accepting Phnom Penh's terms on relief operations, denying aid to Cambodians living at the Thai border in regions controlled by the Khmer Rouge. Brian Walker, director general of Oxfam during that period, persuasively points out in a memorandum to me that Shawcross never clarifies what "at the border" meant. In fact Oxfam helped Cambodian refugees in Thailand who were there to stay but refused to send aid across the border to Cambodians in areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge. It seems to me that this is a proper distinction for a relief agency to draw, and it is incredible that Shawcross ignores it. Perhaps such oversights become inevitable when the quality of mercy is strained.

Reading *The Quality of Mercy* left me with the impression that Shawcross is guilty of the moral failing for which he indicts others, namely, a willful exploitation of human suffering for undisclosed ends. He seems so much to want to settle scores with the left that he largely overlooks the overriding and antecedent responsibilities of the United States for producing the horrible devastation in Cambodia. As a result, he has written an unreliable and unbalanced book. □

A Late, Ironic Whitman

EDWARD HIRSCH

REJOICINGS: Poems 1966-1972. *By Gerald Stern. Metro Book Co. 79 pp. $13.95. Paper $6.95.*

PARADISE POEMS. *By Gerald Stern. Random House. 87 pp. $12.95. Paper $6.95.*

In 1974 I came across a thin book titled *Rejoicings: Selected Poems 1966-1972* in the back of a Philadelphia bookstore. The book had recently been published by a small Canadian press, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, in an edition of 500 copies. I had never heard of the author, Gerald Stern, but I was immediately struck by the peculiarity of his voice (simultaneously ironic, grief-stricken and exultant), his startling extravagance, humor and compassion. He was clearly past the first flush of youth—one poem began "I didn't start taking myself seriously as a poet/until the white began to appear in my cheek"—and the poems all began with a sense of personal loss and disappointment. Yet they were also small triumphs of rejuvenation, little celebrations of neglected and forgotten places. However flawed, here was an unabashed romantic with a sense of irony and a deep sympathy for the victimized, a middle-aged visionary wandering through the ruins—a weedy field, a burned out Army barracks—struggling to transform loss into exaltation. "When I have Reached the Point of Suffocation" speaks with a touching simplicity and awkwardness about the difficulty of the task:

> It takes years to learn how to look at
> the destruction
> of beautiful things;
>
> to learn how to leave the place
> of oppression;
>
> and how to make your own regeneration
> out of nothing.

I'm not sure that the struggle for regeneration was wholly clear to me then, but it is everywhere apparent that *Rejoicings* was written out of just such a quest.

It is now possible to re-read *Rejoicings*, in a handsome new edition from the Metro Book Co., in the light of the knowledge provided by the three books that have followed it: *Lucky Life* (1977), *The Red Coal* (1981) and *Paradise Poems* (1984). Seen in this way, the book seems almost a prelude, a promise of the more exuberant and ex-

Edward Hirsch is the author of For the Sleepwalkers *(Alfred A. Knopf), a book of poems.*

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travagant poems to come. It strikes a large number of what have become Stern's characteristic chords and tonalities, his typical verbal strategies and techniques, his essential themes. Failure is Stern's premise. "Rejoicings" is the name of the tractate on mourning in the Talmud, and his book as a whole is informed by an almost ecstatic commitment to mourning, an overwhelming desire to rescue the past from namelessness and oblivion.

In "Some Secrets," a recent essay about his poetic development, Stern reveals that the poems in *Rejoicings* grew directly out of a crisis that occurred around his fortieth birthday. He writes:

> I think, when I look back now, that it was my own loss and my own failure that were my subject matter, as if I could only start building in the ruins. Or that loss and failure were a critical first issue in my finding a new subject matter, that they showed me the way. Or that my subject was the victory over loss and failure, or coming to grips with them.

That's why Stern's work keeps returning to abandoned city lots and the waste places of nature, why so many of his poems start with assertions such as "I love the weeds—I dream about them" ("The Weeds") or "I am sitting again on the steps of the burned out barrack" ("On the Far Edge of Kilmer"). It is here, too, that his politics originate—with a sense of both "the dignity of isolation" and the dream of community, with his compassion for the defeated, the ignored and the failed. *Rejoicings* was a beginning. The richer and more fully realized poems of Stern's succeeding books go much further in establishing that politics, building out from the individual to the community, linking the personal to the historical. In those books he becomes a poet with a utopian ideal, a late, ironic, Jewish disciple of Whitman.

Stern is a poet of great rhetorical energy and force—a spiritual heir to Emerson, temperamentally akin to the early Ginsberg and the late Roethke—yet he is less interested in the perfected artifact of the poem than in the emotion it embodies. Two of the key lyrics in *Paradise Poems*, "Weeping and Wailing" and "It's Nice to Think of Tears," celebrate an almost joyous sadness and revel in feeling. "We have to start with feeling," one poem instructs us, "we poor machines" ("Fritz"). "In Memory of W.H. Auden" begins:

> I am going over my early rages again,
> my first laments and ecstasies,
> my old indictments and spiritualities.
> I am standing, like Schiller, in front of Auden's door
> waiting for his carved face to let me in.
> In my hand is *The Poem of My Heart*
> I dragged
> from one ruined continent to the other,
> all my feelings slipping out on the sidewalk.

On one level the poem is an elegy for a "wrinkled priest" and poetic "magician"; on another it is about artistic loneliness, about feeling like a "clumsy Caliban" before "old Prospero," knowing that the master's stick will never rest on his head, that he will have to wait decades for the first riches. "I had to find my own way back," the poem announces. "I had to/free myself, I had to find my own pleasure/in my own sweet cave, with my own sweet music." Stern's tribute becomes a poem about finding a personal music, a self.

Stern is a poet of the egotistical sublime, a writer who understands the world in terms of the self and reads his own feelings across the landscape. A surprising (and perhaps disconcerting) number of poems in *Paradise Poems* begin in the present tense with a direct and often extravagant personal assertion: "I am letting two old roses stand for everything I believe in" ("Orange Roses"); "I know this life is a madness" ("Huzza!"); "Today it was just a leaf that told me/I should live for love" ("Today a Leaf"). The "I" is usually doing something small and specific in a Stern poem, something quirky and emblematic, characteristically conjoining the miniature and the gigantic, the self and the world. Often one thing is playfully made to represent another; a daily object is arbitrarily designated as a sign for a much larger idea or emotion. In "I Pity the Wind" a broom is said to stand for "my speech on justice" and a handkerchief for "the veil of melodrama I have worn for thirty years." Similarly, in "Christmas Sticks" a pair of sticks are transformed into old-world Jewish intellectuals coming home from a wedding, "two great masters of suffering and sadness/singing songs about love and regeneration."

When it comes to tone, Stern is the most surprising and slippery of poets. Typically, he pursues a metaphor or an

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idea as far as possible to see what it will yield, with the result that his comic inflations often turn out to be dead serious. For example, "Soap" begins as an odd, semihumorous piece about finding small bars of soap in human shape ("Here is a green Jew/with thin black lips"), but it quickly evolves into a study of the poet's imaginary East European counterpart who died in the Holocaust. Stern's poems take off on great imaginative and rhetorical flights, and are full of exaggerations, but ultimately they are about witnessing.

Like his emblematic Christmas sticks, Stern is a poet of doubleness: a master of suffering and sorrow continually singing of love and regeneration. All his work is haunted by memory, by the reality of an irretrievable past, but *Paradise Poems* goes further than his previous work in calling that past a paradise, the only one available to us. "I'm in heaven," one poem testifies, "I saw the meadow, I heard the voices, I felt/the light on my face—in Marietta, Ohio" ("At Jane's"). For Stern, paradise is not a place in the hereafter so much as a country he's already visited, a world of lost innocence and unity, a memory of rapturous moments and ecstatic feelings. "That was the everlasting/life, wasn't it," he asks rhetorically about his youth. "The true world without end" ("Vivaldi Years"). The elegiac poem "The Expulsion" laments for a paradise of two, "two at the most," the poet and his father standing in line to see Masaccio's painting of Adam and Eve leaving the garden. "The Dancing" recalls a paradise of three, the poet and his parents, dancing wildly in their tiny living room on Beechwood Boulevard:

> . . . the world at last a meadow,
> the three of us whirling and singing,
> the three of us
> screaming and falling, as if we were
> dying,
> as if we could never stop—in 1945—
> in Pittsburgh, beautiful filthy Pitts-
> burgh, home
> of the evil Mellons, 5,000 miles away
> from the other dancing—in Poland
> and Germany—
> oh God of mercy, oh wild God.

By remembering not only "the evil Mellons" but also that "other dancing" Stern becomes a political as well as a personal poet, turning his attention back to the historical world, remembering that one family's heaven exists alongside another's hell. His work continually struggles to enlarge itself so that the destruction of one kingdom—a

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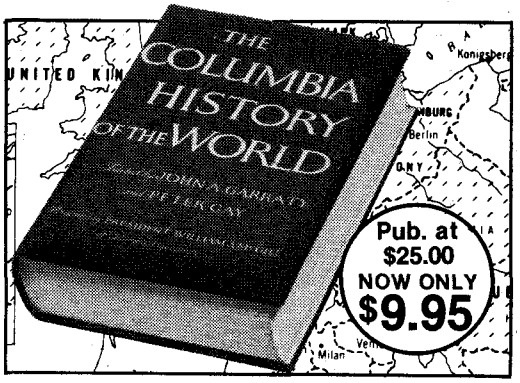

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private personal world—comes to stand for the destruction of a second kingdom—the larger public world. In both realms, every paradise is lost.

The idea of regeneration through music is one of the central motifs of *Paradise Poems*. "It's only music that saves me," "Romania, Romania" asserts, and song is the book's dominant metaphor of transport and transformation, even of momentary transcendence. Again and again the poems re-enact an experience "too good for words" ("Fritz"), of lying down and listening to Kreisler and Bach and Virgil Thompson, of walking around with the memory of Menuhin and Heifetz and, of course, "the great Stern himself/dragging his heart from one ruined soul to another" ("Romania, Romania"). The poems dwell lovingly on moments of singing in harmony. The idea animating them is ultimately the same idea that animated *Rejoicings*: "how hard it was to live/with hatred, how long it took to convert/death and sadness into beautiful singing" ("Singing").

Gerald Stern is the most unlikely of our poets. He is a romantic with a sense of humor, an Orphic voice living inside history, a sometimes comic, sometimes tragic visionary crying out against imprisonment and shame, singing of loneliness and rejuvenation, dreaming of social justice and community. I think of him as an ecstatic Maimonides writing his own idiosyncratic guide for the perplexed, helping us to live in the world as it is, converting our losses, transforming death and sadness into singing. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Robert Motherwell

Stepped down along the single helix of the Guggenheim's gallery, about 150 bright works by Robert Motherwell convey the impression of a thread of DNA on some colossal scale. Motherwell's work falls into four sorts—elegies, opens, collages and a somewhat ill-defined type I shall designate occasional paintings—about the same number as the bases, sugars and phosphates that compose a nucleotide unit in the DNA polymer. No representative collection of contemporary art should have less than a whole Motherwell unit—one each of the elegies, opens, collages and occasional paintings, which come in various sizes to suit the acquisitional resources and ambitions of different museums. Such a tetrad is the very minimum necessary for coming to terms with an artist it is clearly easier to rhapsodize about than analyze, and even at that, one's understanding would be limited. For Motherwell's total corpus—he turned 70 this year and has been showing his paintings for four decades—is characterized by a remarkable degree of replication: there are about 150 elegies so far, for example, and over 200 opens. It is as though he had, in the spirit of the Nietzschian yeasayer, endorsed a kind of eternal recurrence, and it is this recurrence that gives his career a weight unpredictable from the seeming lightness of the single works.

Not every artist can stand up against the cruel demands of the Guggenheim space, where each painting must be experienced in several distinct ways. One traces a single path down the narrow ribbon of the main gallery; if the display is chronological, one internalizes the life externalized on the walls, and if the life there is barren, the experience is bleak. But the dimensions of the path itself, as of the interior space of the museum's core, impose severe constraints on the appreciation of single works, since one cannot help seeing each work twice, once close up and once across the vast shaft of emptiness the building winds itself around. For certain paintings this may be too close and too far. The fairly narrow ramp forbids the optimal distance for certain paintings, which is somewhere behind the retaining wall in the unoccupiable void. But by the time one sees them across the void, one sees from too far. I remember that the Rothko show, which ought to have been overwhelming, failed the test of this museum, for at the imposed distances his banded canvases looked like so many Indian blankets, slightly garish. But Motherwell and the Guggenheim were made for one another, and the show is a triumph and a rare fulfillment of what must have been Frank Lloyd Wright's generating vision. The Guggenheim's brooding spiral affords a rare interpretive opportunity, especially since the whole of this show has a different interest—because of the repetitions—than the modular parts. The Watson and Crick in each of us to want to crack its code.

Describing two of his paintings, "Iberia" and "Spanish Painting with the Face of a Dog," Motherwell observes in an interview that one would have to know certain things about Spanish bullrings and indeed about Spanish bulls in order to understand what is going on. Both the paintings, he says, "have a bull in them, but you cannot really see the bull. They are an equivalence of the ferocity of the whole encounter." What he shows, and this is general, is the feeling rather than the look. He thus complies with a famous imperative in Mallarmé: "Paint not the thing but the effect the thing produces." Two points follow from this. First, Motherwell's work is abstract in the sense of being nonrealistic but not in the sense of being nonobjective. Each painting is about some definite thing that could have been shown realistically had the artist decided to paint against Mallarmé's injunction. Each of the works is a response to some visual reality, in principle accessible to us all. From this his art derives its universality. And the essential objectivity invalidates in advance the standard formalistic responses to his paintings.

But second, the effect a given visual reality will have on us varies profoundly according to our individual experience and sensibility, our psychic histories. Motherwell's style derives from his personal experiences, and this severely limits the sort of interpretation that refers to the influences of other artists. You cannot subtract his world or his affective substance from the paintings and concentrate merely on what is left, for they are severely reduced if they are not perceived as a double opening into a painted world and a soul. Small wonder then that openings should play so central a role in his iconography: the opens exemplify his philosophy of art. And small wonder that the linear experience of the whole show is so powerful: here is a powerful life responding powerfully to powerful stimuli.

The collages are perhaps the most natural entries into the somewhat complex interpretation each work demands, simply because each has an object pasted on it to which the whole work responds. Two of them show wrappings used by the French publisher Gallimard to ship issues of *NRF*, presumably to R.M. himself. This says something about the kind of person the painter is: *NRF*, for a time edited by André Gide, is an intellectually rarified magazine of

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French thought and imagination. It is difficult to imagine other members of the New York School reading it, let alone subscribing to it. Another collage, "The French Line," contains a label from a sachet of *gressins*, a kind of gourmet emblem one could not imagine figuring in the gustatory life of Jackson Pollock. Motherwell stands out from his artistic peers like the preppie in the Gashouse Gang—intellectual, refined, fastidious, sybaritic. But the label is also patterned with vertical stripes, alternately orange and white, and must allude to his prophetic "The Little Spanish Prison" of 1941, which uses stripes in a way later made central by Sean Scully. The label is pasted onto a white rectangle, surrounded by an orange arch, the same color as the stripes. Arches connote triumph. The work might then mean triumph over taste; it is so tasteful as to falsify itself. It is a witty, allusive work, but also the signature of a personality at home in atmospheres only dimly known to the roughnecks of Abstract Expressionism, with whom he was also at home.

The occasional paintings, on the other hand, distance the objects which occasion them in favor of their effect, though you can usually tell, often from the helpful titles, to what they refer. "Fishes with Red Stripes" plays off the prepositional ambiguity of "with," since these are red-striped fish but also fish which occupy the same space as a red horizontal stripe. You can tell that the painting is of fish by the shapes on the canvas, which convey the feeling of fish—not, I think, a very deep feeling for Motherwell. A deeper feeling is displayed toward the figure in "Interior with Pink Nude" of 1951, where the nude is not a life study but an eroticized set of protuberances, a synesthesia of skin and palpability. For the deepest feelings of all, one must address the two great suites: the Spanish elegies and the considerably more demanding opens.

I know of no paintings by a contemporary artist more moving than the Spanish elegies. Their power must somehow be explained by the feeling in Motherwell that he has managed to objectify, and which has driven him in an obsessive way to deposit repeatedly much the same array of forms. I recall being transfixed the first time I saw one of them, which I knew, instantly, to be a great and serious work, even though I did not know the title or the specific meaning. The elegies are typically composed of two or three ovoid forms, clearly living and probably human, interspersed with vertical bars, clearly inanimate and probably architectural. All the forms are black. One knows without reflection that one is not looking merely at a heavily painted pattern of ovals and bars, an expressionistically painted segment of an egg-and-dart frieze, in part because one knows that the shapes are not painted *against* a white background but are located *in* a white space. It is a

WIDOW IN A STONE HOUSE

Dieu a tout fait de rien.
Mais le rien perce.
Paul Valéry

Someone was calling me: *Come out! Come out!*
Go from pillows to the ringing cold.

Outside your stone house in October is
The nature of nothingness:

Stars pasted to sky like square green
Bits of confetti, too tiny, too tiny,

And cold excites me, it is operatic
And greedy, it clangs and ripples like fat

Moon slices sliding across lakewater
Under a heavenly bowl, black, stellar, moonless.

It is an owl
Dropped on a chainlink fence

That I am watching,
Freezing, paralyzed.

Frost touches the invisible grass,
The tucked wet oakleaves.

Silence drops, more and more. I'd better crawl
Back through my white door,

The voices whipping after me, *Coward, coward!*
As I thrust my icy feet under my blanket . . .

Don't hate me. In the morning there will be still
The flexible green of Connecticut hills,

High lawns that reappear like tablecloths,
Glamorous foliage furling and rocking,

Cardinals flashing out from gloomy boughs
Across bright patches they will make terribly bright,

Occasional churches,
A sense of light and safety.

I'll see it all, outside my window
While I wash my dishes,

My hands pulled forward by forks, knives, tureens,
I pray the fine wineglasses not to break—

It will be beautiful for the weekend people
When they come driving, full of happiness

To be in the countryside, rolling their car windows
Down for the breeze, straining to catch the bigness

Of air itself,
Pointing the beauty out, perceiving it.

Smelling its rooty, complicated freshness,
They will believe there is no nothingness.

Alicia Ostriker

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space purged by violence, leaving human remnants and architectural fragments to testify to a vanished plenitude. The power of these works is unaffected by variations in scale or by the addition of auxiliary colors or by an increase in the number of elements. Whatever the feeling underlying them, it can neither be denied nor eradicated, and the spiritual meaning of the repetitions transcends, accordingly, the meaning common to the several instances. Repetition in some artists can simply be evidence of a dried inspiration. In others it is part of the content of the work: Donald Judd's works contain repetitions as components of their identity. In Motherwell, the repetitions are not in the works but in the *oeuvre*. They re-express an enduring feeling. His Irish elegies, on the other hand, are not convincing in this way. The muted color of shamrock is too mechanically iconic a color to go with depth, and I doubt the feeling is there to sustain a series. It is too willed.

The opens, finally, are the most demanding of Motherwell's works because they are initially the most empty. They characteristically consist of a single monochrome rectangle, horizontal and very large, usually red, on (or in) which is drawn a vertical rectangle. That is the "opening." The lines of the interior form are thin and almost casual, and seem weak in relation to the large rectangle, whose edges are the edges of the canvas. The opens present themselves as walls of paint, much in the manner in which Balzac describes the legendary *chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* in his overwhelming parable of artistic search. They *are* walls, and they are *of* walls. The smaller form depicts (or is) an opening into some marvelous occluded space beyond. This is a great metaphor for the human condition, to which Motherwell, trained as a philosopher, must be sensitive, but it is least compelling when most literary, as in the somber "In Plato's Cave No. 1" of 1972. Hegel speaks of philosophy as "painting its grey in grey," and so this is a philosophical painting in substance and in execution. But just because Motherwell thinks philosophically, he should know better than to show the wall of Plato's cave in this way. Plato's cave *is* our world, full of the colors and shapes whose absence makes the world of the Spanish elegies so wasted. To see that this very world, noisy and bright and warm, is also as insubstantial as a show of shadows is to grasp the great dislocating force of Plato's stunning image. The cave is not a drab opening to something more radiant, but the very surface of the perceived world as a window into a colorless abstraction.

Well, this is a beginning. It is a sobering thought that the words of appraisal one wants to apply to these works—elegant, thoughtful, austere, intellectual, critical, aristocratic, subtle, tasteful, refined—are almost terms of studied abuse in the art world of our time. In this sense Motherwell's paintings stand as a mirror of our age: in their grace we see our tawdriness. □

THEATER.

PAUL BERMAN

A Kurt Weill Cabaret
Hamletmachine

Why do serious movie-lovers have such trouble appreciating theater? Partly it's because they've grown accustomed to the extravagances of the screen. They want hoopla and big effects, these serious movie-lovers, though they'd never admit it to themselves. They go to theater looking for fireworks. They find them at the opera. Grand opera, above all the performing arts, is in fashion. Meanwhile the art of theater, when it flourishes, does so on tiny stages in remote theaters, with minuscule casts in minuscule plays, or in no play at all, just a revue. No extravagance. Merely the spark of life—if anyone's noticing.

I thought of this watching Martha Schlamme present her evening of Kurt Weill at the tiny Harold Clurman Theatre. Schlamme has been singing Weill for years. Not long ago she was doing it with Eric Bentley. Currently she's with Alvin Epstein. Certainly there was nothing vast about the production, except the use of microphones, which rattled one's ears. There was much to be criticized. Schlamme and Epstein seemed overdirected at times, underrehearsed at others—a bad combination. Epstein is a fine actor and has a good voice, but he gets lost in song rhythms or gets trapped by them. Yet the night I was there, something caught fire. Maybe it was Schlamme hamming it up in her Spandex pants and purple blouse, conjuring the great dives of

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Bilbao. Maybe it was Brecht's lyrics to Weill's music—those lyrics that make Ira Gershwin and Maxwell Anderson and Ogden Nash, the American writers who teamed with Weill, look flat and tinselly. Schlamme's rendition of Brechtian women throwing themselves away for the wrong man, of German war widows who never stopped to think what war means until their husbands were killed—these performances were at once rueful, angry, ironic, sexy, bitter, tragic. Like life, no? At least it was like something you don't, can't, find at the movies.

Another example of theater-in-the-tiny: Heiner Müller's *Hamletmachine* at Theater for the New City. Müller is Brechtlike himself in some respects. He is an East German plainly out of sorts with "really existing socialism," also with really existing capitalism. His main audience is in the West, though he seems to have no desire to go there. *Hamletmachine* is a series of takes or shticks on *Hamlet*, presented in an order that appears at first to be random. Ideals and illusions of all sorts are mocked, including, noticeably, the ideals of communism, though certainly the play is too nihilist to be considered merely anticommunist. Tear the works down, Müller seems to be saying, tear it all down, spare nothing. And here again was a spark of life. Mary Shultz played all the parts, jumping from comic lambasts to histrionics to finger exercises. She was often in profile to the audience, now radiant, now militant, now looking like a heroine out of sci-fi. The power of her performance wasn't lasting. There was a gleam and it was gone. The play itself isn't lasting. It takes fifty minutes and is over. "Too short," my companion and I said to each other. "But there was something there." □

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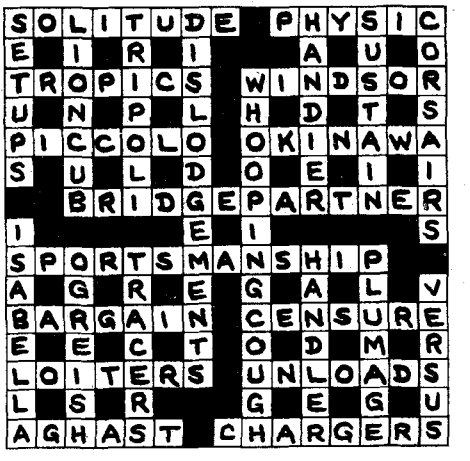
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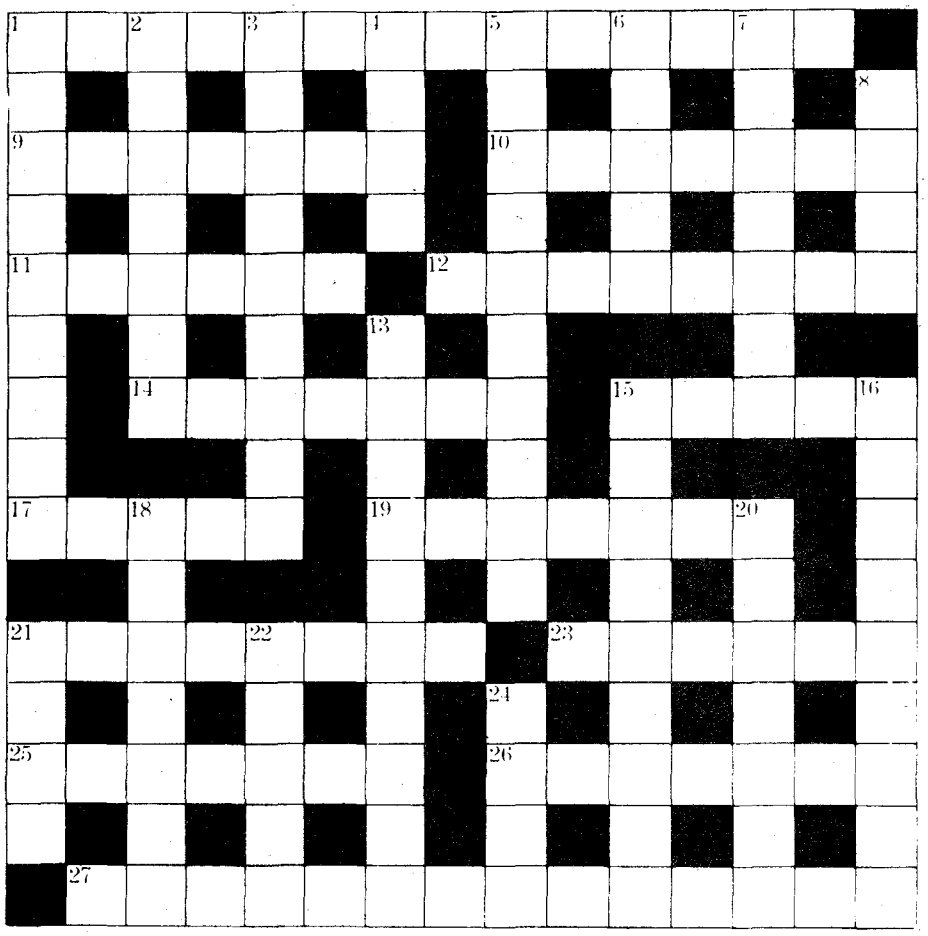
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 What Boz sketched? One club so described. (8,6)
9 Describing an uncle-ish relationship, perhaps, it's sort of nice to see around the stomach, as they sometimes say. (7)
10 Laws passed by the Communists, or how one prepares them for publication? (7)
11 They might show certain scales to be transposed into G-sharp. (6)
12 Would a very active Congress be so described, or only someone who sounds like Pryor? (8)
14 Though not exactly clear, is tasteful for most people! (7)
15 Painting category of "Montage Nr. Eight"? (5)
17 Intense? That seems to describe how one lives, if one does. (5)
19 Basis of a fair location, perhaps. (7)
21 Of mixed descent, are in U.S.A., though somewhat confused. (8)
23 Steal back with quite a disturbance? You may have to pay back something if you do. (6)
25 Like Thomas, the writer, somewhat masculine? (7)
26 Is in a kind of lyric poem, or perhaps is in any longer writing. (7)
27 Ill-tempered allusion, but it might help you find what you're looking for. (5-9)

DOWN

1 A sort of ape, crying for a eulogy. (9)
2 You might want one instead of 14, but it gives a cue for the pack to be shuffled in. (7)
3 Keeps back the way a mat-man is pinned. (9)
4 This might give you the dope, but I wouldn't recommend it. (4)
5 Sort of supersonic beat? (10)
6 Rice found here—pay the minister inside. (5)
7 What the driver might have comes up a little firm on what Crockett possibly took cover from, though only a small animal. (7)
8 A modest but pale combination. (4)
13 If one first had an auto, it might make one confess! (Perhaps I bore, around one of 11!) (10)
15 One of these rows in G & S? (With such a role, doing wrong, no doubt. (9)
16 Not here, obviously, ere wheels might be repaired. (9)
18 The old, old one of verse was not shot up. (7)
20 Meat dubbed fit for a king? (7)
21 In play, superior to desire? (4)
22 A steamer does without them. (5)
24 Evidently a quiet spirit can make a lot of money. (4)

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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